This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

+ *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.

+ *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.

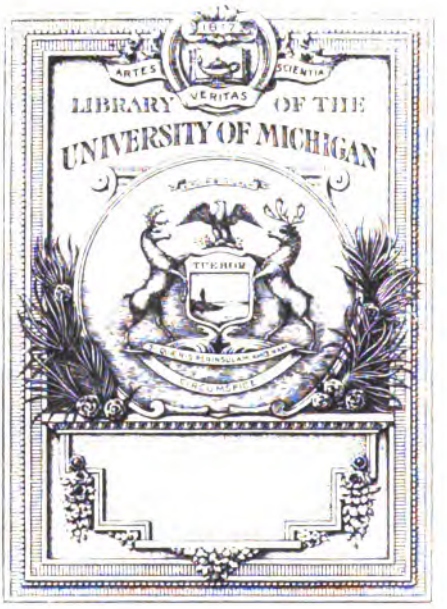
+ *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.

+ *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at `http://books.google.com/`

A 685,521



THE GIFT OF
Tappan Presb. Assoc.

PETER'S

LETTERS TO HIS KINSFOLK.

FIRST AMERICAN,

FROM THE SECOND EDINBURGH EDITION.

Lockhart, John Gibson

NEW-YORK:

PRINTED BY C. S. VAN WINKLE,

101 Greenwich Street,

FOR A. T. GOODRICH & CO. KIRK & MERCEIN, C. WILEY & CO.

W. B. GILLEY, AND JAMES OLMSTEAD.

.....

1820.

DA
772
L816
1820

gift
Tappan Pres. Lib
4-5-1932
DA
772
.L816
1820

DEDICATION.

TO THE RIGHT REVEREND

THE LORD BISHOP OF ST. DAVIDS.

My Lord,

I trust you will excuse the liberty I take in inscribing to you a new edition of my Letters from Scotland. That none of these letters were addressed to your Lordship, is a circumstance for which I take great shame to myself, after the very kind manner in which you spoke to me on that head, the day I left you—may I be permitted to add, after the long experience I have had of your Lordship's concern and attachment, in several years of professional attendance, and, since that was laid aside, of private intercourse and friendship.

I must not attempt to deny, that there are some things in these Letters which are not exactly what I should have judged proper for your Lordship's eye; but your Lordship is aware, that they were written

without the smallest notion of being printed. I hope the effect of the whole correspondence may be agreeable to you, and I well know the gentle and forgiving nature of your disposition. Above all, I should be highly flattered to learn, that the account I have given of the State of Religion in Scotland, had interested and pleased you. The truly liberal and apostolic zeal with which your Lordship has so long been labouring to serve my countrymen in their most important concerns, is appreciated and honoured by none more highly than,

My Lord,

Your Lordship's very humble,

and very affectionate servant,

PETER MORRIS.

Penshurpe Hall, Aberystwith.

CONTENTS.

	Page.
LETTER I.—Arrival—Edinburgh—Calton-Hill,	1
LETTER II.—Mr. W——, of W——,—Lawn-Market,	6
LETTER III.—Sheep's-head—Edinburgh—Canongate—Holyrood-House—Queen Mary,	13
LETTER IV.—Mr. W——,	18
LETTER V.—Scottish Peasantry—Scottish Gentry—Scottish Women—Ladies' Dress,	21
LETTER VI.—Mr. J——,	27
LETTER VII.—Visit to Mr. J——,—Dinner party,	33
LETTER VIII.—Mr. W——,—Tories—Whigs—Clergy—David Hume,	41
LETTER IX.—Cranioscopy—David Hume—Rousseau,	50
LETTER X.—Mr. M——,—Mr. M—— and Mr. R——,—Mr. M——,	54
LETTER XI.—Burns' Dinner,	60
LETTER XII.—Burns' Dinner,	71
LETTER XIII.—University of Edinburgh,	82
LETTER XIV.—University of Edinburgh—Dr. Thomas Brown,	96
LETTER XV.—Mr. Playfair—New Observatory—David Hume's Monument,	103
LETTER XVI.—Scottish Students,	108
LETTER XVII.—English Universities,	112
LETTER XVIII.—Society of Edinburgh,	117
LETTER XIX.—Society of Edinburgh—Dancing—Hornem's Waltz,	123
LETTER XX.—Edinburgh—Houses—Edinburgh—Cadies—Gaelic language—Edinburgh—Cadies,	131
LETTER XXI.—Dr. B——,—Professor J——,—Singular Recognition—Mr. James W——n.	137
LETTER XXII.—Speculative Society,	147
LETTER XXIII.—Cranioscopy and Craniology—Madonnas—Hercules Farnese,	158
LETTER XXIV.—Edinburgh Blue Stockings—A Rout,	165
LETTER XXV.—Edinburgh Blue Stockings—Mrs. G—— of L——n,	173
LETTER XXVI.—Theatre—Mr. Mackay's Baillie Jarvie—Mr. William Murray—Mrs. Henry Siddons,	175
LETTER XXVII.—Edinburgh—The Castle,	183
LETTER XXVII.—Scottish Bar—Mr. W—— S—— and Mr. J——,—Edinburgh—Parliament Close—St. Giles's—Parliament House—King Charles,	187
LETTER XXIX—Court of Session,	194
LETTER XXX—Court of Session,	200
LETTER XXXI—Statue of Lord Melville—Lord Melville—Statues of Forbes and Blair—Lord President Blair	205

Page.

LETTER XXXII.—Mr. Clerk, 209
LETTER XXXIII.—Mr. Cranstoun, 214
LETTER XXXIV.—Mr. Jeffrey, 218
LETTER XXXV.—Mr. Henry Cockburn—Comparison of Mr. Cockburn and Mr. Jeffrey, 221
LETTER XXXVI.—Mr. Moncrieff—Mr. Murray—Mr. J. P. Grant, 229
LETTER XXXVII.—Scottish Bar—Mr. Forsyth—Scottish Bar, 233
LETTER XXXVIII.—Court of Session—Lord Justice Clerk—Lord Robertson—Lord President Hope, 239
LETTER XXXIX—Macqueen of Braxfield—Lord Hermand, 245
LETTER XL.—Edinburgh Review—Stupidity of the Young Whigs, 255
LETTER XLI.—Edinburgh Whigs, 266
LETTER XLII.—Edinburgh Booksellers, 271
LETTER XLIII.—Edinburgh Booksellers, 281
LETTER XLIV.—Edinburgh Booksellers—Gabriel's Road, 288
LETTER XLV.—Blackwood's Magazine, 297
LETTER XLVI—Blackwood's Magazine, 298
LETTER XLVII.—Artists and Connoisseurs—Mr. Bridges' Shop, and Bits—Mr. Allan—Mr. Allan's Pictures, 313
LETTER XLVIII.—Allan's Pictures, 323
LETTER XLIX.—Paintings, 329
LETTER L.—Wilkie and Allan—Hamilton and Runciman—William's Pictures—Nasmyth and Thomson—Staff-Surgeon Schetky—Mr. Raeburn—Mr. John Watson and Mr. Nicholson—Mr. William Thomson, 338
LETTER LI.—Borthwick Castle—Gala Water—The Tweed—Mr. S———,—Mr. Wordsworth—Mr. S———, 349
LETTER LII.—Mr. S——, 360
LETTER LIII.—Melrose Abbey—Dryburgh Abbey, 366
LETTER LIV.—Mr. S———,—Craniology, 372
LETTER LV.—Mr. S———,—The Scotch Novels—Scottish Literature, 378
LETTER LVI.—The Gout—The Clergy—Peter's Portrait, 388
LETTER LVII.—The General Assembly—Commissioner's Levee—Procession—Town and Country Ministers, 391
LETTER LVIII.—The Assembly Aisle—The Galleries—Moderates and Wildmen—Dr. Robertson—Dr. Erskine—Sir Henry Moncrieff—Dr. Inglis, 402
LETTER LIX.—The General Assembly—Commissioner's Dinner, 414
LETTER LX.—The General Assembly—Dr. Skene Keith, and Mr. Lapslie, 417
LETTER LXI.—Clergy of Scotland—Sir Henry Moncrieff—Dr. Inglis—Mr. Andrew Thomson—Dr. Macknight, and Dr. Brunton, 423
LETTER LXII.—Scottish Episcopalian Church—Dr. Sandford—Mr. Alison—Episcopalian Fund—Old and New Light Anti-Burghers—Dr. M'Crie—Dr. Jamieson—Old Potts, 433
LETTER LXIII.—Old Potts—Scottish Dandyism—Dilettanti Society—Dandyism, 443

Page

LETTER LXIV.—Visit to Lasswade—Roslyn Glen—Roslyn Chapel—Roslyn Castle—Hawthornden—Drummond of Hawthornden—Mr. G——,—Mr. Wordsworth's Sonnet to Mr. Gillies—The Ettrick Shepherd—Mr. L.——,—M de Peudemots—Captain H——,—The Ettrick Shepherd—Mr. W——, 451

LETTER LXV.—Visit to Glasgow—Kirk of Shotts—Glasgow, 465

LETTER LXVII.—Glasgow—Cathedral of Glasgow—Rottenrow and Antiquities of Glasgow—Coffee-Room of Glasgow—Dinner Party and Glasgow Punch, 471

LETTER LXVIII.—Glasgow University—Hunterian Museum—Professor Young—Professor Jardine—Hunterian Museum—Supper at Archie Cameron's, 483

LETTER LXIX.—Glasgow Manufactories, and Mr. Kirkman Finlay—Green of Glasgow—Nelson's Monument—Green of Glasgow—Philosophical Weaver—His Opinion of the present State of the Edinburgh Review, 494

LETTER LXX.—Old Potts—Buck's-Head Inn—Glasgow Punch—Glasgow Dandies—Glasgow Ball, 504

LETTER LXXI.—Glasgow Wit—Gaggery—Trotting—Glasgow Clubs, 515

LETTER LXXII.—Glasgow Merchants—Observatory and Botanical Garden—James Grahame—Mr. Wilson, 529

LETTER LXXIII.—Covenanters—Observance of the Sabbath—Dr. Chalmers—State of Religion in Scotland—Quarterly Review, 527

LETTER LXXIV.—Paisley—Mr. J—— S——,—Dr. C——,—Bothwell Castle—Bothwell Bridge—Hamilton Palace—Pictures—Cadyow Castle—The Mountain Bull—Valley of the Clyde—Glasgow, 540

LETTER LXXV.—Country Sacrament, 549

LETTER LXXVI.—Country Sacrament—Sacrament Sabbath—Sunday Evening, 560

LETTER LXXVII.—Breakfast at the Laird's—Sacrament Monday—The Rev. Mr. ——,—Dinner at the Manse—Hotch-potch, and Lochfine Herrings—The Croupier—Song, The Shooting Minister—Old Mortality—Departure—Glasgow Steam-Boat, 569

PETER'S

LETTERS TO HIS KINSFOLK.

LETTER I.

TO THE REV. DAVID WILLIAMS.

Oman's Hotel, Edinburgh, March 6.

I ARRIVED here last night, only two hours later than my calculation at Liverpool, which was entirely owing to a small accident that befel Scrub, as I was coming down the hill to Musselburgh. I was so much engaged with the view, that I did not remark him stumble once or twice, and at last down he came, having got a pretty long nail run into his foot. I turned round to curse John, but perceived that he had been fast asleep during the whole affair. However, it happened luckily that there was a farrier's shop only a few yards on, and by his assistance we were soon in a condition to move again. My chief regret was being obliged to make my entry into the city after night-fall, in consequence of the delay; and yet that is no great matter neither. As for the shandrydan, I never had the least reason to repent my bringing it with me. It is positively the very best vehicle in existence. The lightness of the gig—the capacity of the chariot—and the stylishness of the car—it is a wonderful combination of excellencies. But I forget your old quizzing about my *Hobby*.

My evil genius, in the shape of an old drivelling turnpike-man, directed me to put up at the Black Bull, a crowded, noisy, shabby, uncomfortable inn, frequented by all manner of stage-coaches and their contents, as my ears were well taught before morning. Having devoured a tolerable break-

fast, however, I began to feel myself in a more genial condition than I had expected, and sallied out to deliver one or two letters of introduction, and take a general view of the town, in a temper which even you might have envied. To say the truth, I know not a feeling of more delightful excitation, than that which attends a traveller when he sallies out of a fine clear morning, to make his first survey of a splendid city, to which he is a stranger. I have often before experienced this charming spirit-stirring sensation. Even now, I remember, with a kind of solemn enthusiasm, the day when (in your company too, my dear David,) I opened my window at the White Horse, Fetter-lane, and beheld, for the first time, the chimneys and smoke (for there what else could I behold?) of London. I remember the brief devoirs paid by us both to our coffee and muffins, and the spring of juvenile elasticity with which we bounded, rather than walked, into the midst of the hum, hurry, and dusky magnificence of Fleet-street. How we stared at Temple-Bar! How our young blood boiled within us as we passed over the very stones that had drank the drops as they oozed from the fresh-dissevered head of the brave old Balmerino! With what consciousness of reverence did we pace along the Strand—retiring now and then into a corner to consult our pocket-map —and returning with a high satisfaction, to feel ourselves under the shadow of edifices whose very names were enough for us! How we stood agaze at Charing Cross! The statue of the Martyr at our right—Whitehall on our left—Westminster Abbey, lifting itself like a cloud before us—pillars and palaces all around, and the sun lighting up the whole scene with rays enriched by the deep tinges of the atmosphere through which they passed.

I do not pretend to compare my own feelings now-a-days with those of that happy time—neither have I any intention of representing Edinburgh as a place calculated to produce the same sublime impressions, which every Englishman must experience when he first finds himself in London. The imagination of a Southern does not connect with this northern

city so many glorious recollections of antiquity, nor is there any thing to be compared with the feeling of moral reverence, accorded by even the dullest of mankind, to the actual seat and centre of the wisest and greatest government in the world. Without at all referring to these things, the gigantic bulk and population of London, are, of themselves, more than sufficient to make it the most impressive of all earthly cities. In no place is one so sensible, at once, to the littleness and the greatness of his nature—how insignificant the being that forms scarcely a distinguishable speck in that huge sweep of congregated existence—yet how noble the spirit which has called together that mass—which rules and guides and animates them all—which so adorns their combination, and teaches the structures of art almost to rival the vastness of Nature. How awful is the idea which the poet has expressed when he speaks of "all that mighty heart!"

And yet there is no lack of food for enthusiasm even here. Here is the capital of an ancient, independent, and heroic nation, abounding in buildings ennobled by the memory of illustrious inhabitants in the old times, and illustrious deeds of good and evil; and in others, which hereafter will be reverenced by posterity, for the sake of those that inhabit them now. Above all, here is all the sublimity of situation and scenery—mountains near and afar off—rocks and glens—and the sea itself, almost within hearing of its waves. I was prepared to feel much; and yet you will not wonder when I tell you, that I felt more than I was prepared for. You know well that my mother was a Scotchwoman, and therefore you will comprehend that I viewed the whole with some little of the pride of her nation. I arrived, at least, without prejudices against that which I should see, and was ready to open myself to such impressions as might come.

I know no city, where the lofty feelings, generated by the ideas of antiquity, and the multitude of human beings, are so much swelled and improved by the admixture of those other lofty, perhaps yet loftier feelings, which arise from the contemplation of free and spacious nature herself. Edin-

burgh, even were its population as great as that of London, could never be merely a city. Here there must always be present the idea of the comparative littleness of all human works. Here the proudest of palaces must be content to catch the shadows of mountains; and the grandest of fortresses to appear like the dwellings of pigmies, perched on the very bulwarks of creation. Every where—all around—you have rocks frowning over rocks in imperial elevation, and descending, among the smoke and dust of a city, into dark depths, such as nature alone can excavate. The builders of the old city, too, appear as if they had made nature the model of their architecture. Seen through the lowering mist which almost perpetually envelops them, the huge masses of these erections, so high, so rugged in their outlines, so heaped together, and conglomerated and wedged into each other, are not easily to be distinguished from the yet larger and bolder forms of cliff and ravine, among which their foundations have been pitched. There is a certain gloomy indistinctness in the formation of these fantastic piles, which leaves the eye, that would scrutinize and penetrate them, unsatisfied and dim with gazing.

In company with the first friend I saw, (of whom more anon,) I proceeded at once to take a look of this superb city from a height, placed just over the point where the old and new parts of the town meet. These two quarters of the city, or rather these two neighbouring but distinct cities, are separated by a deep green valley, which once contained a lake, and which is crossed at one place by a huge earthen mound, and at another by a magnificent bridge of three arches. This valley runs off toward the estuary of the Forth, which lies about a mile and a half from the city, and between the city and the sea there rises on each side of it a hill—to the south that called Arthur's Seat—to the north the lower and yet sufficiently commanding eminence on which I now stood—the Calton Hill.

This hill, which rises about 350 feet above the level of the sea, is, in fact, nothing more than a huge pile of rocks,

covered with a thin coating of soil, and, for the most part, with a beautiful verdure. It has lately been circled all round with spacious gravelled walks, so that one reaches the summit without the least fatigue. It seems as if you had not quitted the streets, so easy is the ascent; and yet where did streets or city ever afford such a prospect! The view changes every moment as you proceed; yet what grandeur of unity in the general and ultimate impression! At first you see only the skirts of the New Town, with apparently few public edifices to diversify the grand uniformity of their outlines; then you have a rich plain, with green fields, groves and villas, gradually losing itself in the sea-port town of Edinburgh, —Leith. Leith covers, for a brief space, the margin of that magnificent Frith which recedes upward among an amphitheatre of mountains, and opens downward into the ocean, broken everywhere by green and woody isles, excepting where the bare brown rock of the Bass lifts itself above the waters mid-way to the sea. As you move round, the Frith disappears, and you have Arthur's Seat in your front. In the valley between lies Holyrood, ruined—desolate—but majestic in its desolation. From thence the Old Town stretches its dark shadow—up, in a line, to the summit of the Castle rock—a royal residence at either extremity—and all between an indistinguishable mass of black tower-like structures—the concentrated "walled city," which has stood more sieges than I can tell of.

Here we paused for a time, enjoying the majestic gloom of this most picturesque of cities. A thick blue smoke hung low upon the houses, and their outlines reposed behind on ridges of purple clouds;—the smoke, and the clouds, and the murky air, giving yet more extravagant bulk and altitude to those huge strange dwellings, and increasing the power of contrast which met our view, when a few paces more brought us once again upon the New Town—the airy bridge—the bright green vale below and beyond it—and, skirting the line of the vale on either side, the rough crags of the Castle rock, and the broad glare of Prince's Street, that most superb of terraces—

all beaming in the open yellow light of the sun—steeples and towers, and cupolas, scattered bright beneath our feet—and, far as the eye could reach, the whole pomp and richness of distant commotion—the heart of the city.

'Such was my first view of Edinburgh. I descended again into her streets in a sort of stupor of admiration.

Excuse my troubling you with all this, now that I have written it; but do not be alarmed with any fear, lest I should propose to treat you with much more of the same kind of diet. I have no intention to send you a description of the cities and scenery of Scotland. I refer you *semel et simul* to Sir John Carr, and our dear countryman, Mr. Pennant. I have always been "a fisher of men;" and here also, I promise you, I mean to stick to my vocation. But enough for the present.

Your's sincerely,

P. M.

P. S.—You will observe by the date of my letter, I have already left the Black Bull. I write from one of the most comfortable hotels I ever was in, and have already ascertained the excellence of the port.

LETTER II.

TO THE SAME.

Oman's, March 6.

DEAR DAVID,

Do you recollect W——, of Trinity? I suspect not; but you have heard of him a thousand times. And yet you may have met him at my rooms, or North's; for I think he determined, after you began to reside. At all events, you remember to have heard me describe his strange eccentric character—his dissolute behaviour during the first years of his residence—his extravagant zeal of study afterwards—last of all, the absurdity of his sudden elopement, without a degree,

after having astonished the examining masters by the splendid commencement of his examination. The man is half-mad in some things; and that is the key of the whole mystery.

W—— and I were great friends during the first terms I spent at Jesus. He had gone to school at Harrow with my brother Samuel, and called on me the very day I entered. What a life was ours in that thoughtless prime of our days! We spent all the mornings after lecture in utter lounging—eating ice at Jubb's—flirting with Miss Butler—bathing in the Charwell, and so forth. And then, after dinner, we used to have our fruit and wine carried into the garden, (I mean at Trinity,) and there we sat, three or four of us, sipping away for a couple of hours, under the dark refreshing shade of those old beechen bowers. Evensong was no sooner over, than we would down to the Isis, and man one, or sometimes two, of Mother Hall's boats, and so run races against each other, or some of our friends, to Iffley or Sandford. What lots of bread and butter we used to devour at tea, and what delight we felt in rowing back in the cool misty evening—sometimes the moon up long ere we reached Christ Church meadows again. A light supper—cheese-and-bread and lettuces—and a joyous bowl of Bishop—these were the regular conclusion. I would give half I am worth to live one week of it over again. At that time, W—— and I, Tom Vere, (of Corpus,) and one or two more, were never separate above three or four hours in the day.

I was on my way to deliver a letter of introduction to a young barrister of this place, when, in turning the corner of a street, my old friend, Will W——, passed close at my elbow. I knew him in a moment, although he is greatly changed, and called after him. He turned round with a fierce air, as if loth to be disturbed, (for he was evidently up to the chin in meditation;) but, on recognizing his ancient acquaintance, nothing could be more hearty than the kindness of his countenance. After a few hurried interrogations on both sides, diversified by scarcely any responses on either, I took his arm and began to explain to him the purposes of my visit to

a city in which he had so little expectation of seeing me. He accompanied me immediately to the Calton Hill, of which I spoke in my last, and where, as he assured me, he spends at least one hour every day when in Edinburgh. On coming down he carried me to the Hotel where I now am; and, having seen my baggage and horses fairly established, and walked a good deal about the town, we proceeded to his house, where I remained for the rest of the day. I assure you this rencounter has afforded me the highest pleasure, and I doubt not it will be of infinite use to me, moreover—for W—— is, perhaps, of all men, the very person I should have selected to act as my cicerone in Scotland. Indeed, I wonder at myself for not having made more accurate inquiries about him before I set out; but I had somehow got a confused idea in my head that he was resident in France or Germany, and really had never thought of him in relation to my own schemes of visiting his country. He has already introduced me to several very pleasant fellows here. But before I describe his companions, I must endeavour to give you some little notion of himself.

After leaving Oxford under the strange circumstances you have often heard me speak of, W—— proceeded to the North, where he spent several years in severe study, not a whit discouraged in his views, or shaken from his attachments, by the singular catastrophe to which the constitutional and irresistible panic of a moment had exposed him. He changed, however, but indeed it was scarcely possible for him to do otherwise, the course and tenor of his usual pursuits; passing for a time from the classics, with the greater part of whom he had formed a pretty accurate acquaintance, and flinging himself over head and ears into the very heart of Gothic antiquities, and the history, poetry, and romance, of the middle ages. These he has quitted by fits and starts, and spent the intervals of their neglect in making himself far better skilled than is common in the modern literature of foreign countries, as well as of England; but ever since, and up to this moment, they form the staple of his occupation—the daily bread of his mind.

He lives almost continually in the days gone by, and feels himself, as he says, almost a stranger among matters which might be supposed to be nearer to him. And yet he is any thing but a stranger to the world he actually lives in; although indeed he does perhaps regard not a few both of its men and its things, with somewhat of the coldness of an unconcerned visiter. In short, for there is no need to disguise the fact to you, he has nursed himself into such a fervent veneration for the thoughts and feelings of the more ancient times of his country and of ours, (for as to that matter he is no bigot,) that he cannot witness, without a deep mixture of bile, the adoration paid by those around him to thoughts, feelings, and persons, for whom he entertains, if not absolute, at the least no inconsiderable comparative contempt. I have said that he is not a bigot, in regard to any old ideas of difference between his own country and ours. This I attribute in a great measure, certainly, to the course of study he has so devoutly pursued, and which could not have failed, in making him acquainted with the ancient condition of both countries, to reveal to him far more points of agreement than disagreement between them. But a part of his liberality must also, I should think, be ascribed to the influence of his education in England, more particularly in Oxford; his long residence in that noble city having filled the finest part of his mind with reverent ideas concerning both the old and the present grandeur of England, such as can never be eradicated, nor even weakened, by any after experience of his life. Such, I suspect, from his conversation, to be the truth of the case; and yet it is only from odd hints and suggestions, that I have made shift to gather so much, for of all men living, he is the least chargeable with the sin of dissertation, and I never heard him in my life give more than one sentence to the expression of any opinion he entertains.

Having now succeeded to the family estate, which is a very ancient and tolerably productive one, W—— feels himself perfectly at liberty to pursue whatever mode of life is most

agreeable to his fancy. He has travelled a good deal on the continent of Europe, and even penetrated into Asia Minor and Egypt, as far up as the Pyramids. These journeys, however, could only have been undertaken for the purpose of gratifying some very ardent curiosity, in regard to a few particular points connected with his former devotedness to classical learning; and he now declares, that unless he should be tempted to visit Spain for the sake of her cathedrals, he will never again leave the white cliffs behind him. He makes an annual or biennial trip to London; but, with this exception, he is always to be found either at his old castle in Berwickshire, or here in Edinburgh, where he has a very snug house, although by no means in a fashionable part of the town. From a feeling of respect for his ancestors, he refuses to quit the old family residence, which is no other than a lodging up five pair of stairs, in one of those huge aerial edifices of the Old Town—edifices which sometimes contain beneath a single roof a population, layer above layer, household above household, more numerous than that of many a street in many a city south of the "ideal line." Here W—— still sits in the same enormously stuffed and prodigiously backed elbow-chair, and still reposes beneath the same antediluvian testers which served his grandfather, his great grandfather, and all his generations back, for aught I know, to the days of Queen Mary; it being on many occasions his most chosen boast, that the degradation which affects, in other houses, the blood of the race, has touched in his house nothing but their furniture, and has not totally destroyed even that.

W—— ushered me into this remarkable habitation of his, not only without the least symptom of shame for its apparent obscurity, and the equally apparent filth of its approach, but with a certain air of proud and haughty satisfaction, as if he would have been ashamed to have conducted me to one of the newer, more commodious, and more elegant houses we had seen in the New Town. "The times are changed," says he, "since my grandfather, the Lord of

Session, used to see all the ladies of quality in Edinburgh in this old-fashioned *habitaculum*. I desire to see none of them here now. I have a tailor for my neighbour immediately below me—a cobler—a tallow chandler—a dancing-master—a grocer—and a cowfeeder, are all between me and the street; and above, God knows what store of washer-women—French teachers—auctioneers—midwives—seamstresses—and students of divinity, are between me and the chimney-top. But no matter. I have some claret, which is not too old to be tasteable; and I shall make an endeavour to give you, at least, as good commons as you were used to at the Bachelor's table of Trinity."

I had no reason to complain of his fare, although I confess, when the covers were first removed, I was not without some apprehensions, that it might prove as Methuselamitish as his dwelling. Whether that might, or might not be, the provender was excellent. It consisted, *primo*, of broth made from a sheep's head, with a copious infusion of parsley, and other condiments, which I found more than palatable, especially after, at my host's request, I added a spoonful or two of Burgess to it.

Secundo, came the aforementioned sheep's head in *propria personæ*—the hair having been taken off, not by the knife, but by the hot-iron, and the skin retaining from this operation, not only an inky hue, which would astound an Exmoorian, but a delicious, oily, fragrant *gusto*, worthy of being transferred, *me judice*, to the memorandum-book of Beauvilliers himself. These being removed, then came a leg of roasted mutton, five years old at the least, from the Castlemains of W——. A dish of pancakes, very finely powdered with sugar, brought up the rear of the dinner, every five minutes of which we washed down with a glass of rare sherry, as ancient as Falstaff, or Johannisberg, which my friend had imported himself from the very cellars of Metternich. A ewe-milk cheese, which I found as good as any thing which ever came from the Pays de Vaud, and a glass of ale, such as I could not beat even in Cardigan,

formed a sort of appendage to the feast; and just before the cloth was drawn, I tasted, for the first time, a liqueur, which I prefer vastly to all the Marasquin—ay, to all the Curacoa in existence—the genuine Usquebaugh of Lochaber. Our Chateau-la-fitte and olives went down after this repast like very nectar and ambrosia. But you will say, I am a gourmand even upon paper.

To conclude with a portrait of my entertainer.—William W—— is a pale-faced, grave-looking thin gentleman, of forty years old, or thereby. He has a stoop in his gait, and walks with his toes in; but his limbs seem full of sinew, and he is of a seemly breadth across the back. He uses to wear a hat of singular broad brims, like a Quaker, for the convenience of shadow to his eyes, which are weak, though piercing. These he farther comforts and assists by means of a pair of spectacles, of the pure crystalline in winter, "but throughout the sunny portion of the year," green. His nose is turned up somewhat at the point, as it were disdainfully. His lips would be altogether indiscernible, but for the line of their division; and can call up in no mind (unless, perchance, on the principle of contrast) any phantasy either of cherry or rosebud, to say nothing about bees. This yellow visage of his, with his close firm lips, and his grey eyes shining through his spectacles, as through a burning-glass, more brightly—the black beard not over diligently shorn—all lurking under the projecting shadow of that strange brim, compose such a physiognomy, as one would less wonder to meet with in Valladolid, than in Edinburgh. It is plain, yet not ugly. It is monastic, yet it is not anchoretic. It is bitter, and yet it wants not gleams of sheer good humour. In short, it belongs, and only could belong, to the nervous, irritable, enthusiastic, sarcastic William W——. The years which had passed since our parting, had exaggerated the lines of this countenance, and entirely removed every vestige of its bloom. But the features were too marked to have undergone any essential alteration; and after dinner, when some half a dozen bumpers of claret had somewhat smoothed its asperities, I could

almost have fancied myself to be once more transported back to the common-room of Trinity or Jesus.

To you, who know us of old, I need scarcely add, that two Oxonians meeting after such a separation, over such wine, were in no hurry to shorten their sederunt. I think it is very creditable to me, however, that I retained enough of my senses to be able to find my way to Oman's, without accepting, far less asking, either direction or assistance. Of course, I am too well-seasoned a cask to feel the smallest bad effects this morning. Quite the contrary: I have already swallowed three cups of coffee, as many rolls and eggs, and about a pound of excellent mutton-ham, and expect W—— every moment to resume his functions as my *Lionizer*.

Ever your's,
P. M.

LETTER III.

TO THE SAME.

March 14.

Dear David,

If you knew what a life I have led since I wrote to you, you would certainly feel no difficulty in comprehending the reason of my silence. I thought my days of utter dissipation had been long since over, but I fear your clerical frown would have told me quite the reverse, had you been present almost any evening that has passed since my arrival in Edinburgh. I shall not shock you with any of the particulars; remember that you were once a layman yourself, and try to excuse about the worst you can imagine. What a glorious night we spent at your rooms the Saturday before you took orders!

I continue, notwithstanding all this, to pick up a vast deal of information concerning the present literary, political, and religious condition of this country; and I have already jotted down the heads of several highly valuable letters, in which I

design, ere long, to embody the *elite* of all my acquisitions for your benefit and that of Jack. Perhaps, however, the facts I have gathered may be nothing the worse for undergoing a more leisurely digestion in my own mind, before I think of conveying them to your's. Depend upon it, that I shall very soon put you in possession of more knowledge, touching Scotland, than was ever revealed to any wondering common-room, by any travelled or travelling tutor, since the days of Dr. Johnson. So have patience.

W—— was never more completely in his element, than when he took me to see Holyrood. You, who delight in honest enthusiasm, whatever be its objects, would have been gratified beyond measure, with the high zealous air of dignified earnestness he assumed, long before we arrived even within sight of the old palace. From his own house, the way thither lies straight down the only great street of the Old Town—a street by far the most impressive in its character of any I have ever seen in Britain. The sombre shadows, cast by those huge houses of which it is composed, and the streams of faint light cutting the darkness here and there, where the entrance to some fantastic alley pierces the sable mass of building—the strange projectings, recedings, and windings—the roofs—the stairs—the windows, all so luxuriating in the endless variety of carved work—the fading and mouldering coats of arms, helmets, crests, coronets, supporters, mantles, and pavilions,—all these testimonials of forgotten pride, mingled so profusely with the placards of old clothes'-men, and every ensign of plebeian wretchedness—it is not possible to imagine more speaking emblems of the decay of a once royal city, or a more appropriate avenue to a deserted palace. W—— was at home in every nook of this labyrinth. I believe he could more easily tell in what particular house of the Canongate any given lord or baron dwelt two hundred years ago, than he could in what street of the new city his descendant of the present day is to be found. It was quite marvellous with what facility he expounded the minutest hieroglyphics which had, no doubt, once been visible on shields of

which my eye could now see nothing but rough outlines and smooth surfaces. "Ha!" said he, "the crescents and the sheaves!" pointing to a tall thin building, from the windows of which sundry patches of wet linen hung dangling over our heads—"the crescents within the tressure—the sheaves—and the sword in pale on the escutcheon of pretence—this was once the palace of the Seatons—*Oh! domus antiqua, heu! quam dispari dominare domino!*" A little on, the heart and stars of Douglas—the lymphads of Argyle—the lion of Dundas, and I know not how many monsters of how many chieftains, were all saluted in their turn with like exclamations of reverence. He directed my attention to a building of prodigious elevation on the right, altogether having very much the appearance of the more ancient hotels in Paris, and informed me that here was the residence of the Hamiltons, after they had left their house without the walls, in the time of James VI.; "and here," said he, pointing right forward, "is Holyrood. You are already within the liberty, for we have crossed the strand."

At first sight, this ancient habitation has truly a great deal of royalty in its aspect. Two huge square towers—one many centuries older than the other, but still sufficiently like to balance each other nobly—a low curtain between these, and, in the centre, a spacious gateway under a lofty canopy, somewhat after the fashion of a crown imperial, the whole of fine old grey stone; in front, an open esplanade, paved with massy pieces of granite, and a few kilted grenadiers loitering about the gate—all had an appearance of neglected majesty, which I could not help feeling to be abundantly impressive. W—— uncovered himself as we stept into the porch, and I saw by his manner, that I should sorely offend him by omitting the same mark of veneration. Within, I found a melancholy quadrangle, for the most part of a noble architecture, but all over as black as if the sun had never shone upon it since the death of Queen Elizabeth. An ancient gentlewoman, with whom my friend seemed to be on terms of infinite familiarity, undertook forthwith to conduct us over the interior. Here,

but for the power of memory, and it may be of imagination, I suspect there would not, after all, be much to merit particular attention. The gallery is long and stately, but the vile daubs of Fergus I. and his progenitors, entirely disfigure it. The adjoining apartments of Queen Mary, now appropriated to the use of the family of Hamilton, are far from noble in their dimensions; but there is a genuine air of antique grandeur in the hangings and furniture of the inner apartments, none of which have been changed since the time of the most unfortunate of Queens and Beauties—and this is enough to atone for every thing. In the state-room also, the attendant pointed out a cypher, which she said was Mary's, but W—— told me, that, in fact, that room had been last fitted up for Charles I., and that the cypher was composed of his initials, and those of his Queen Henrietta Maria. Here, then, is the bed in which Mary slept with Darnley—the closet where Rizzio was murdered—the ante-chamber in which Knox insulted his sovereign, and made it his boast that he "cared little for the pleasant face of a gentlewoman." There are some portraits, and one exquisite one of Mary herself—I mean an exquisitely beautiful portrait of some exquisite beauty—for as to the real features of the lovely Queen, he must be a more skilful antiquarian than I pretend to be, who could venture any guess with respect to them. Even her eyes are represented of many different colours; but this I only take as an evidence, that they were of that most delicious of all hues, if hue it may be called, that is as changeful as the cameleon—the hazel. I think it is Mackenzie that raves somewhere so delightfully about those softest, and yet most queenlike of eyes. They have not indeed the dazzling sparkle of the Jewish or Italian black, neither have they the vestal calmness of the blue—but they are the only eyes in the world that have the watery swimming lustre of conscious weakness—and when they can change this for the fire of command, and flash annihilation from their contracting lids, what eyes can be compared to them, or what eyes could be so fitting for Mary?

The portrait is very beautiful indeed, but it is only a minia-

ture, and by no means satisfies my imagination so much as that in the picture gallery of the Bodleian. There is nothing I should like better than to ascertain the real history of that painting. It is so softly executed, that, at first sight, one would suppose it to be done in water colours, and to be covered with a glass. But it is in oils, and on a very old piece of oak (for I once took it down to examine it). It strikes me, that they used to tell some story about its having been painted by a nun before Mary left France; but I suspect the tradition of its history is very vague and uncertain. I think, however, the picture carries much more of the air of reality about it than any I have seen. What luxurious pensiveness in the lips! what irresistible melting radiance in the eyes—the eye-lids how beautifully oval; the eye-lashes how long, how tender! there was nobody ever invented the like except Correggio . . . . . But I forget that I am not talking to W——, who would fain, if he could, not only make a beauty, but a saint of her.

There is also a fine portrait of Charles I.—one of the many, many masterly Vandykes. The king is in a riding habit; he has the same indescribable look of majesty and melancholy which makes it impossible for any man to look upon it without wondering by what process of brutalizing, even a Cromwell or a Bradshaw should ever have learned to regard the original without the reverence of humility. How could any common mortal feel otherwise than abashed in the presence of that "grey discrowned head?"—And Charles kept his court here too for a time, and Laud preached, and Rothes flattered, and the Presbyterians themselves looked smoothly on all the pageants of his state. What a different kind of journey he lived to make hither, and what a different kind of return to his Whitehall!

Some spacious, but uncomfortable looking apartments in the newer part of the quadrangle, were occupied by the Bourbon princes during their stay here. I saw the *Prie-dieu* used by Monsieur, and many other little relics of their Catholic devotion; but in truth, I neither felt, nor pretended to feel,

either curiosity or interest about tracing the footsteps of these gentlemen. I have seen these younger sprigs of the lily, and with all my respect for the good old king himself, I wish the lily were rid of a few of its incumbrances. I shall write very soon again, and hope in a more amusing way.

Your's ever,

P. M.

P. S.—I forgot to mention the only inhabitants of this Palace, or rather of its precincts, are gentlemen, who find it convenient to take advantage of the sanctuary still afforded by the royalty of the soil. All around the Palace itself, and its most melancholy garden, there are a variety of little miserable patchwork dwellings, inhabited by a considerable population of gentry, who prefer a residence here to one in a jail. They have abundance of room here within their limits, for the whole of Arthur's Seat is, I believe, considered as part of the royal domain. However, they emerge into the town of a Sunday; and I am told some of them contrive to cut a very fashionable figure in the streets, while the catch-poles, in obedience to the commandment, "rest from working."

LETTER IV.

TO THE SAME.

March 29.

I BELIEVE, that had I given myself up entirely to the direction of my friend W——, I should have known, up to this hour, very little about Edinburgh more modern than the Canongate, and perhaps heard as little about any worthies she has produced since the murder of Archbishop Sharpe. He seemed to consider it a matter of course, that morning after morning the whole of my time ought to be spent in examining the structure of those gloomy tenements in wynds

and closes, which had, in the old time, been honoured with the residence of the haughty Scottish Barons, or the French ambassadors and generals, their constant visiters. In vain did I assure him, that houses of exactly the same sort were to be seen in abundance in the city of London, and that even I myself had been wearied of counting the *fleurs-de-lis* carved on every roof and chimney piece of a green grocer's habitation in Mincing-lane. Of such food, in his estimation, there could be no satiety: every *land* had its coat of arms, and every quartering called up to his memory the whole history of some unfortunate amour, or still more unfortunate marriage; in so much that, had I taken accurate notes of all his conversation, I am persuaded I might, before this time, have been in a condition to fill more sheets than you might be likely to peruse, with all the mysteries of the *causes celebres*, or, to speak more plainly, of the Scandalous Chronicle of Scotland. What horrors of barbarism—what scenes of murder, rape, incest—seem to have been the staple commodities of a week-day life, among these ferocious nobles! But, in good truth, I did not come to Scotland to learn such things as these; and although a little sprinkling of them might be very well in its way, I soon found it expedient to give my good friend a slight hint, that I wished he could contrive to afford me something else for the main woof of my meditations . . . . . He begins to understand my drift, and will, I think, learn to accommodate himself to my humour, *pas-a-pas*.

Notwithstanding all his devotion to the past, indeed, he is far from being an unconcerned or inept observer of more modern things—and I have already said as much. He is quite *au fait*, I have found, in regard to the history and performances of all the leading characters of the present day in Scotland; but, unless questions are put to him, he seems, with a very few exceptions, to make a point of never alluding to their existence. It would appear as if he was not over anxious to remember that such people are; but when the conversation actually turns on them and their merits, he expresses himself

apparently in no uncandid manner concerning the least—and in a tone of genuine admiration concerning the greatest of them. But I despair of making you comprehend the vagaries of such an original.

I wish you had a few minutes' use of the magical mirror, if it were only that you might enjoy one view of him, as he sits wrapped up in his huge blue velvet robe-de-chambre, with a night-cap of the same, dashing execrations by the dozen upon the whigs, the presbyterians, and the Edinburgh reviewers; for his splenetic imagination jumbles them all together—*disjecta membra poetae*—in one chaos of abomination. Could one enter into his premises of prejudice, one might perhaps find less difficulty in joining in his sweeping sentences of conclusion. He considers whiggery as having been the ruin of the independence of his country, and as forming, at this moment, the principal engine for degrading the character of his countrymen. I own I am rather at a loss to discover what he means by "whiggery," (for he never deigns to give a definition;) and all I know of the matter is, that it is something for which he equally vituperates Mr. Halkston of Rathillet, and Mr. Francis Jeffrey—two persons, between whom, I suspect, few other people would find many circumstances of resemblance—and each of whom, I am quite sure, would disdain, with all his might, the idea of being coupled with the other. What you or I might be apt to designate by the same term, would, I am certain, coincide in very few points with any notion he may happen to affix to it. But, perchance, we may be able to get a little more light as we go on. In the mean time, W—— has gone into the country for a few days, upon some of his county politics. I wished to have gone with him, but had caught a vile cold, and did not care for aggravating it. I shall have more leisure to write during his absence; so expect a long letter next time.

P. M.

LETTER V.

TO LADY JOHNES.

DEAR AUNT,

You ask me to speak more particularly concerning the external aspect and manners of the people among whom I am sojourning. I wish it were as easy for me to satisfy your curiosity on some other points mentioned in your last letter, as on this.

The Scots are certainly rather a hard-favoured race than otherwise; but I think their looks are very far from meriting the sort of common-place sarcasms their southern neighbours are used to treat them with. Indeed, no one who has seen a Scots regiment, as I should suppose you must have done, can possibly be of opinion that they are at all an ugly nation; although it is very likely he may be inclined to prefer the general appearance of some other nation or nations to theirs. For my part, I am not without suspicion, that a little longer residence among them might teach me to become an absolute admirer of their physiognomies; at least, I am sensible, that the slight repugnance I felt for them at first, has already very considerably given way.

What the Scottish physiognomists are used to talk of, with the highest satisfaction, is the air of superior intelligence stamped on the faces of their countrymen of the lower orders of society; and indeed there is no question, a Scottish peasant, with his long dry visage, his sharp prominent cheek-bones, his grey twinkling eyes, and peaked chin, would seem a very Argus, if set up close beside the sleek and ponderous chubbiness of a Gloucestershire farmer—to say nothing of the smarter and ruddier oiliness of some of our own country folks. As to the matter of mere acuteness, however, I think I have seen faces in Yorkshire, at least a match for any thing to be found farther to the north. But the mere shrewdness of the Scotch peasant's face, is only one part of its expres-

sion; it has other things, I should imagine, even more peculiarly characteristic.

The best place to study their faces in is the kirk; it is there that the sharpness of their discernment is most vehemently expressed in every line—for they are all critics of the sermon, and even of the prayers; but it is there also that this sharpness of feature is most frequently seen to melt away before emotions of a nobler order, which are no less peculiarly, though far less pertinently theirs. It is to me a very interesting thing to witness the struggle that seems to be perpetually going on between the sarcastic and reverential elements of their disposition—how bitterly they seem to rejoice in their own strength, when they espy, or think they espy, some chink in the armour of their preacher's reasoning; and then with what sudden humility they appear to bow themselves into the dust, before some single solitary gleam of warm affectionate eloquence—the only weapon they have no power to resist. If I mistake not, it is in this mixture of sheer speculative and active hard-headedness, with the capacity of so much lofty enthusiasm concerning things intangible, that we must seek for the true differential quality of the Scottish peasants. I shall have abundant occasion to return to this hereafter.

The gentlemen of this part of the country have assuredly by no means the same advantages over those of the south, which the Scotch peasants have over the English. I know not altogether to what these advantages enjoyed by the lower orders may be owing;—their better education is of course the first and most obvious source; their more sterile soil—and, consequently, their less luxurious life, may be others almost as efficient. Above all, the picturesque aspect of their ever various landscapes, cannot fail to exert a powerful influence on the opening mind of their youth. But in some of these things, at least, the peasantry of particular districts in England share abundantly, and I think there are some pretty extensive tracts on the continent where the whole of these circumstances, or very nearly so, are found acting together, without producing any such similarity of effect as might have

been expected. I suspect that we must go farther back if we would arrive at any satisfactory solution.—Of this too hereafter.

The gentry, however, have no pretensions to a more intelligent exterior than their neighbours of the south. The truth is, that certain indications of worldly quicksightedness, which please on the face, and in the air of a peasant, produce quite a different effect when exhibited in the case of a person of superior rank. One rather wishes to see these things kept under in the appearance of a person of education, than suspects their non-existence in the totality of his character. Without wanting their due proportion of the national enthusiasm, the Scottish gentry seem to show much fewer symptoms of it than those below them; and this is a sufficiently natural result of their sense of their own comparative importance. It is a result, notwithstanding, which tends to make any thing but a favourable impression on the mind of a stranger.

High and low, they are, for the most part, a race of tall, well-formed people; active of limb, and powerful of muscle; leaner by far than the English;—(for here a very fat man is stared at, and one of such bulk as is met with at every corner in London, must, it would seem, lay his account with a little quizzing from all his friends on the subject of his obesity.) In their gait and gestures, they have neither the vivacity of the Frenchman, nor the noble gravity of the Spaniard, nor the stable heavy vigour of the Englishman; but a certain grotesque mixture of elasticity and sedateness, which is sufficient to prove their descent from a hardy and warlike set of marauders, the effects of whose *subæthric* existence have not yet been washed out by any great influx of idleness or luxury; and, at the same time, under favour, to remind one with what zeal these progenitors exerted all their energies, in behalf of the most taciturn species of fanaticism that was ever made subservient to the purposes of ghostly ambition. When a man visits France, whether he be a believer or a despiser of the doctrine of the Spurzheims, he must look long around him before he can find

any face which he could imagine to be the property of one lineally sprung from the loins of the Bayards and the Dugueselins, or, if you will, of the Harlays, and the Du Thous. But here the deterioration of the species, if such there be, has scarcely begun to tell upon their physiognomies; and you meet, at every step, persons who have that about them which would prevent you from being at all astonished, if you should be told immediately afterwards, that they could trace themselves, without difficulty, to the Burleighs and the Claverhouses,—I had almost said, the Bell-the-Cats, and the Kirkpatricks.

I have not, as yet, seen a great deal of the women. Those, even of the peasantry, seem, when young, to be comely and well-complexioned; but it is a great mistake to suppose that they are fairer than with us. And yet the testimony of travellers cannot be entirely despised; and if their report is in any degree a correct one, light hair, and light eyes, were almost universal at no very remote period. This is a circumstance that has often appeared to me to be very inadequately accounted for; I mean the great and remarkable change that has taken place in the complexions not only of the Scotch, but of the English, and indeed of all the Gothic nations of Europe. When the Romans first became acquainted with the Germans and the Britons, there can be no question that both the gentlemen and the ladies of those nations had yellow locks and blue eyes; and you have heard, no doubt, that the Roman belles, stimulated, it is to be suspected, by the stories of their campaigning husbands and lovers, endeavoured, by a thousand tricks of the toilette, to muster charms as nearly as they could in the same taste. You well know, that the Messalinas and Poppæas used to cut off the finest black curls in the world, to make room for false *tetes* manufactured from the hair of the poor girls of the Sicambri and the Batavi, while others strove to produce the same sort of effect by means of hair-powder made of gold-dust, and washes, of more cunning chemistry than I would undertake to describe. Even in far later times, so late as Henry VIII. and Elizabeth, Eras-

mus and Paul Henztner represent the ladies of England as being, with very few exceptions, *blondes;* and such, if voyagers of less illustrious reputation "may be in aught believed," not much above a hundred years ago, were the far greater portion of the beaux and belles of Scotland.

"Sandy-haired" is still one of the standing epithets applied to the ideal Scot, by all inexperienced persons, who introduce any description of him into novels or satires—witness Churchill, and a thousand of less note; and I confess, that I was myself prepared to find the case much more as they have represented it, than I really have done. By looking around me at home, and remembering what the old writers had said of ourselves, I might have learned to be more suspicious of their accuracy; but the truth is, I had never taken the pains to think much about the matter. In fact, they are now as far from being a light-haired people as we are. I amused myself (God forgive me) with counting the number of fair heads last Sunday in a very crowded church, and, I assure you, they did not amount to one in fifty. There are far more people here with locks of all but Israelitish blackness, than of any shade that could with propriety be called either white, yellow, or red; and the general hues are exactly the same variations of brown, between Bistre and Burnt Sienna, which we are accustomed to in the south.

I was at a large party yesterday evening—the first sight I have had of the gay world here—and had an opportunity of viewing, at my leisure, all the fashionable belles of the town. You always accuse me of being too undistinguishing an admirer; but I am sure, even you would have allowed that there was no want of beauty. It is many years since I have been familiar with the *beau monde* of London, but I do not believe I ever in any one evening there, saw a greater number of fine women and of very different kinds too. I had heard before I went that I should see Miss *****, the same celebrated *star* of whom you have so often heard Sir Thomas speak, and who, indeed, cannot show herself any where, even in this unromantic age, without leaving an uneffaceable im-

pression on all that behold her. I confess the description the knight used to give of her appeared to me to be a little high-flown; but "seeing is believing"—the world has assuredly only one *****. I looked round a room crowded with lovely women, but my eye was fixed in a moment; and I never thought of asking which was she. The first view I had was a profile. I had no suspicion that nature could still form countenances upon that heavenly model. The forehead, high and clear, descends almost without a curve into the nose, and that again drops into the mouth with such bold defined elegance of lineament, as I should scarcely have believed to be copied from living beauty, had I met with it in some masterpiece of sculpture. The lips have such a delicate precision of form, and such an expression of divine simplicity in their smile, that one could almost believe they had never admitted any grosser diet than ambrosia; but the full oval sweep of the cheek and chin, and the mode in which these are carried down into the neck, are, perhaps, the most truly antique parts of the whole. And then such hair—such long luxurious tresses of radiant brown, braided with such serene grace upon that meek forehead! If you have seen Canova's *testa d'Helena*, you may form some notion of those most exquisite curls. The colour of her eyes I could not ascertain; I suspect they are dark grey, or hazel; but the redundant richness of her eye-lashes gives them all that glossy splendour which oriental beauties borrow from their Sirmé. But, indeed, colour is a small matter in eyes enchased so deeply beneath such majestic brows. I think Lucretius himself would have admitted, that the spirit must be immortal on which so glorious a tenement has been bestowed!

With this divine exception, I must do the men the justice to say, that the most beautiful women in the room were all matrons. Had she been absent, there were two or three of these on whom all my enthusiasm might well have been expended; and one, Mrs. ******, whose graceful majesty was such, that when I met her next evening in a smaller assembly, I almost began to suspect myself in having been too exclusive

in my deification. But I have already said more than I should have ventured on to almost any other of your sex—a great deal more than I should have dared to write, far less speak, to my cousin—to whom I beg you will present the humble duty of

Her slave, &c. &c.

P. M.

P. S. By way of pleasing Jane, you may tell her that I do not think the Scottish ladies are at all good dressers. They are very gorgeous—I never saw such a display of crimson velvet, and ostrich feathers, and diamond necklaces, except once at a birth-day. But the fashions have a long cold journey before they reach Edinburgh, and I think they do not regain the same easy air which they have before they begin their travels. They are apt to overdo every thing, particularly that vilest and most unnatural of all fashions, the saddle—or I know not what you call it—which is at present permitted to destroy so much of the back, and indeed, to give so much meanness to the whole air. They say the scrophula brought in the high shirt collars of the men—and the Spectator gives some equally intelligible account of the fardingale. Pray, what hunch-backed countess was she that had wit enough to bring the saddle into vogue? I think all the three fashions are equally abominable, and the two of them that still remain should be voted out by the clean-skinned and straight-backed, who, I hope, are still the major part of the community. But, *ne sutor ultra crepidam* ***

P. M.

LETTER VI.

TO THE REV. DAVID WILLIAMS.

Dear David,

Although my sole purpose, or nearly so, in coming to Scotland, was to see and converse with the illustrious men

who live here, I have been in Edinburgh for a fortnight, and can scarcely say that I have as yet seen even the faces of most of them. What with lounging about in the mornings with W——, and claret in the evening, and routs and balls at night, I fear I am fast getting into a very unprofitable life. The only very great man here to whom I had letters of introduction, was S——, and he happened to go out of town for a few weeks, I believe the very day after my arrival. I forwarded my letter to him in the country, however, and he has invited me to pay him a visit there, at the castle he has just built upon the banks of the Tweed. He has been so attentive, moreover, as to send me letters for Mr. M—— the Man of Feeling, Mr. J——, Mr. P——, and several other men of note, on both sides of the question; so that I shall now see as much as I please of all the Dons. I shall take the opportunity of W——'s absence, to call upon all these gentlemen; for, excepting Mr. S—— and Mr. M——, he has no acquaintance with any of them. I believe, indeed, there is little love lost between him and them—and I wish to see things with my own eyes.

Of all the celebrated characters of this place, I rather understand that J—— is the one whom travellers are commonly most in a hurry to see—not surely, that the world, in general, has any such deep and abiding feeling of admiration for him, or any such longing to satisfy their eyes with gazing on his features, as they have with regard to such a man as S——, or even St——t; but I think the interest felt with respect to him is of a more vivacious and eager kind, and they rush with all speed to gratify it—exactly as men give immediate vent to their petty passions, who have no difficulty, or rather, indeed, who have a sort of pleasure in nursing silently, and concealing long, those of a more serious and grave importance. A few years ago, I should, perhaps, have been more inclined to be a sharer in this violent sort of impatience; but even now I approached the residence of J—— with any feelings assuredly rather than those of indifference.

He was within when I called, and in a second I found my-

self in the presence of this bugbear of authors. He received me so kindly, (although, from the appearance of his room, he seemed to be immersed in occupation,) and asked so many questions, and said and looked so much, in so short a time, that I had some difficulty in collecting my inquisitorial powers to examine the person of the man. I know not how, there is a kind of atmosphere of activity about him; and my eyes caught so much of the prevailing spirit, that they darted for some minutes from object to object, and refused, for the first time, to settle themselves even upon the features of a man of genius—to them, of all human things, the most potent attractions.

I find that the common prints give a very inadequate notion of his appearance. The artists of this day are such a set of cowardly fellows, that they never dare to give the truth as it is in nature; and the consequence is, after all, that they rather take from, than add to, the impressiveness of the faces they would flatter. What a small matter is smoothness of skin, or even regularity of feature, in the countenance that Nature has formed to be the index of a powerful intellect? Perhaps I am too much of a connoisseur to be a fair judge of such matters; but I am very sure, that the mere handsomeness of a great man is one of the last things about him that fixes my attention. I do not wish, neither, to deny, that, when I first saw Goethe, the sublime simplicity of his Homeric beauty—the awful pile of forehead—the large deep eyes, with their melancholy lightnings—the whole countenance, so radiant with divinity, would have lost much of its power, had it not been, at the same time, the finest specimen of humanity I had ever beheld; neither would I conceal the immeasurable softness of delight which mingled with my reverence, when I detected, as if by intuition, in the midst of the whole artists of St. Luke's, the Hyperion curls, and calm majestic lineaments, which could be nobody's but Canova's. But although beauty never exists in vain, there is nothing more certain than that its absence is scarcely perceived by those who are capable of discovering and enjoying the marks

of things more precious than beauty. Could all our countrymen of the present time, of very great reputation for talents or genius, be brought together into a single room, their physiognomies would, I doubt not, form as impressive a group as can well be imagined; but among the whole, there would scarcely be more than one face which any sculptor might be ambitious of imitating on marble. J——'s countenance could not stand such a test. To catch the minutest elements of its eloquent power, would I think be a hard enough task for any painter, and indeed, as I have already told you, it has proved too hard a task for such as have yet attempted it.

It is a face which any man would pass without observation in a crowd, because it is small and swarthy, and entirely devoid of lofty or commanding outlines—and besides, his stature is so low, that he might walk close under your chin or mine without ever catching the eye even for a moment. However, he is scarcely shorter than Campbell; and some inches taller than Tom Moore, or the late Monk Lewis. I remember Lord Clarendon somewhere takes notice, that in his age, (the prime manhood of English intellect, as Coleridge calls it,) a very large proportion of the remarkable men were very short in stature. Such, if my memory serves me, were Hales, and Chillingworth, and Sidney Godolphin, and Lord Falkland himself, who used, I think, to say, that it was a great ingredient into his friendship for Mr. Godolphin, that he was pleased to be in *his* company, where he was the properer man. In our own time, we have more than one striking instance of the "*Mens magna in corpore parvo;*"—Buonaparte himself for one; and, by the way, he is the only little man I ever saw, who seemed to be unconscious, or careless, or disdainful of the circumstance. Almost all other persons of that description appear to labour under a continual and distressing feeling that nature has done them injustice, and not a few of them strive to make up for her defects, by holding their heads as high as possible, and even giving an uncomfortable elevation or projection to the chin, all which has a very mean

effect upon their air and attitude, and is particularly hurtful to the features of the face, moreover,—because it tends to reverse the arrangement of Nature, and to throw all those parts into light which she has meant to be in shade. It is exactly the same sort of thing that we all remark on the stage, where the absurd manner in which the lamps are placed, under the feet of the performers, has such a destructive effect, that few actors, except those of the Kemble blood, appear to have any better than snub noses. Now, Napoleon has not the least of this trick; but, on the contrary, carries his head almost constantly in a stooping posture, and so preserves and even increases the natural effect of his grand formation about the eyebrows, and the beautiful classical cut of his mouth and chin—though, to be sure, his features are so fine that nothing could take much from their power.—But, to come back to our own small men, J—— has a good deal of this unhappy manner, and so loses much of what his features, such as they are, might be made to convey.

I have heard many persons say, that the first sight of Mr. J—— disappointed them, and jarred with all the ideas they had previously formed of his genius and character. Perhaps the very first glance of this celebrated person produced something of the same effect upon my own mind; but a minute or two of contemplation sufficed to restore me to the whole of my faith in physiognomy. People may dispute as much as they please about particular features, and their effect, but I have been all my life a student of "the human face divine," and I have never yet met with any countenance which did not perfectly harmonize, so far as I could have opportunity of ascertaining, with the intellectual conformation and habits of the man that bore it. But I must not allow myself to be seduced into a disquisition—I shall rather try my hand at a portrait.

Mr. J——, then, as I have said, is a very short, and very active-looking man, with an appearance of extraordinary vivacity in all his motions and gestures. His face is one which cannot be understood at a single look—perhaps it requires,

as it certainly invites, a long and anxious scrutiny before it lays itself open to the gazer. The features are neither handsome, nor even very defined in their outlines; and yet the effect of the whole is as striking as any arrangement either of more noble or more marked features, which ever came under my view. The forehead is very singularly shaped, describing in its bend from side to side a larger segment of a circle than is at all common; compressed below the temples almost as much as Sterne's; and throwing out sinuses above the eyes, of an extremely bold and compact structure. The hair is very black and wiry, standing in ragged bristly clumps out from the upper part of his head, but lying close and firm lower down, especially about the ears. Altogether it is picturesque, and adds to the effect of the visage. The mouth is the most expressive part of his face, as I believe it is of every face. The lips are very firm, but they tremble and vibrate, even when brought close together, in such a way as to give the idea of an intense, never-ceasing play of mind. There is a delicate kind of sneer almost always upon them, which has not the least appearance of ill-temper about it, but seems to belong entirely to the speculative understanding of the man. I have said, that the mouth is the most expressive part of his face—and, in one sense, this is the truth, for it is certainly the seat of all its rapid and transitory expression. But what speaking things are his eyes! They disdain to be agitated with those lesser emotions which pass over the lips; they reserve their fierce and dark energies for matters of more moment; once kindled with the heat of any passion, how they beam, flash upon flash! The scintillation of a star is not more fervid. Perhaps, notwithstanding of this, their repose is even more worthy of attention. With the capacity of emitting such a flood of radiance, they seem to take a pleasure in banishing every ray from their black, inscrutable, glazed, tarn-like circles. I think their prevailing language is, after all, rather a melancholy than a merry one—it is, at least, very full of reflection. Such is a faint outline of this countenance, the features of which (to say nothing at all of their expression,)

have, as yet, baffled every attempt of the portrait-painters; and which, indeed, bids very fair, in my opinion, to leave no image behind it either on canvass or on copper. A sharp, and, at the same time, very deep-toned voice—a very bad pronunciation, but accompanied with very little of the Scotch accent—a light and careless manner, exchanged now and then for an infinite variety of more earnest expression and address—this is as much as I could carry away from my first visit to "the wee rekit deil," as the Inferno of Altesidora has happily called him. I have since seen a great deal more of him, and have a great deal more to tell you, but my paper is done.

P. M.

P. S. I am to dine with J—— to-morrow at his country house, about three miles from Edinburgh, and shall give you a full account of the party in my next.

LETTER VII.

TO THE SAME.

Dear David,

Since I came to this town the weather has in general been of a very unpleasant kind. When you look out from the windows of your apartment, nothing can be finer than the appearance every thing presents. The air is as clear as amber overhead, and the sun shines with so much power, that in these splendid streets, the division of the bright from the shadowy part, reminds one of the richest effects of a Cuyp, or a Sachtleeven. But when you come out, in the full trust inspired by this brilliant serenity of aspect, you find yourself wofully disappointed. The action of the sun and air upon the nerves, is indeed delightfully stimulant; but the whole charm is destroyed before you have time to enjoy it, by some odious squall of wind which cuts you to the teeth—and what

is worse, comes loaded with a whole cloud of flying dust and gravel, which is sure to leave its traces behind it, on still more delicate parts of your physiognomy. As for myself, I am often obliged to walk with a handkerchief held before my eyes—and in spite of all my precautions, I have been several times in such a state, that I have absolutely rubbed myself blind. The whole of this arises from the want of watering the streets—a thing which might surely be accomplished without the least difficulty, by a subscription among the inhabitants. If this evil be so severe at present, what must it be in the dog-days?—and yet the people submit to it all quietly, in streets, below every one of which they know water is flowing in pipes, ready to be scattered *ad libitum*, and at an expense not worthy of being mentioned.—"*O! cæcas hominum mentes!*"

Yesterday, however, there was an unusual degree of quietness in the state of the atmosphere. A slight shower, which fell in the morning, had laid the most offensive part of the dust, without giving the least appearance of damp to the roads—and I drove to C——k, Mr. J——'s villa, *molto gustosamente*—the expectation of the manifold luxuries I hoped to enjoy there—the prospective delights both of palate and intellect—being heightened and improved by the preliminary gratification I tasted, while the shandrydan rolled along between the refreshed green of the meadows and corn-fields. His house is an old turretted mansion, much patched in the whole mass of its structure, and, I believe, much increased in its accommodations since he entered upon possession of it. The situation is extremely beautiful. There are very few trees immediately about the house; but the windows open upon the side of a charming hill, which, in all its extent, as far as the eye can reach, is wooded most luxuriantly to the very summit. There cannot be a more delicious rest for the eyes, than such an Arcadian height in this bright and budding time of the year; but, indeed, where, or at what time, can a fine wood be looked upon without delight? Between the wood and the house, there is a good garden, and some fields,

in the cultivation of which Mr. J—— seems to take much pleasure; for I had no sooner arrived, than he insisted upon carrying me over his ditches and hedges to show me his method of farming; and, indeed, talked of Swedish turnip, and Fiorin grass, and red-blossomed potatoes, in a style that would have done no dishonour to your friend Curwen himself. I had come, thanks to my rustic ignorance, exactly at the hour appointed for dinner, (five o'clock,) so that I had three parts of an hour of the great man entirely to myself—during the whole of which space he continued to talk about rural affairs, and to trot me up one field and down another, till I was weary, without (*credite posteri!*) making one single allusion to law, politics, or literature.

We were joined toward six o'clock by Professors P—— and L——, and one or two young advocates, who had walked out with them. Then came R—— M——, whom you remember at Balliol, a relation and intimate friend of J——'s. He and the celebrated orator Alison officiate together in one of the Episcopalian chapels in Edinburgh. Although we never knew each other at Oxford, yet we immediately recognized each other's old High-Street faces, and began to claim a sort of acquaintance on that score, as all Oxonian contemporaries, I believe, are accustomed to do, when they meet at a distance from their *alma mater*. There were several other gentlemen, mostly of grave years, so that I was not a little astonished, when somebody proposed a trial of strength in leaping. Nor was my astonishment at all diminished, when Mr. P—— began to throw off his coat and waistcoat, and to prepare himself for taking his part in the contest. When he did so much, I could have no apology, so I also stripped; and, indeed, the whole party did the same, except J—— alone, who was dressed in a short green jacket, with scarcely any skirts, and, therefore, seemed to consider himself as already sufficiently "*accinctus ludo.*"

I used to be a good leaper in my day—witness the thousands of times I have beat you in the Port Meadow, and elsewhere—but I cut a very poor figure among these sinewy

Caledonians. With the exception of L——, they all jumped wonderfully; and J—— was quite miraculous, considering his brevity of stride. But the greatest wonder of the whole was Mr. P——. He also is a short man, and he cannot be less than seventy, yet he took his stand with the assurance of an athletic, and positively beat every one of us—the very best of us, at least half a heel's breadth. I was quite thunderstruck, never having heard the least hint of his being so great a geometrician—in this sense of the word. I was, however, I must own, *agreeably* surprised by such a specimen of buoyant spirit and muscular strength in so venerable an old gentleman, and could not forbear from complimenting him on his revival of the ancient peripatetic ideas, about the necessity of cultivating the external as well as the internal energies, and of mixing the activity of the practical with that of the contemplative life. He took what I said with great suavity; and, indeed, I have never seen a better specimen of that easy hilarity and good humour, which sits with so much gracefulness on an honoured old age. I wish I could give you a notion of his face. It is not marked by any very striking features; but the unison of mildness of disposition, and strength of intellect in the expression, is too remarkable to be unnoticed even by a casual observer. His habits of profound thought have drawn some deep lines about his mouth, and given him a custom of holding his lips very closely shut, otherwise I suspect the whole countenance would have been nothing more than an amiable one; although the light eyes have certainly at times something very piercing in their glance, even through his spectacles. The forehead is very finely developed—singularly broad across the temples, as, according to Spurzheim, all mathematical foreheads must be; but the beauty in that quarter is rather of an *ad clerum* character, or as Pindar hath it,

——προς το παν
Ἐρμηνευων χαλιξω.

I, however, who really, in good earnest, begin to believe a

little of the system, could not help remarking this circumstance; and more particularly so, because I found Mr. L——'s skull to possess many of the same features—above all, that of the breadth between the temples. This other great mathematician is a much younger man than P——; but his hair is already beginning to be grey. He is a very fat heavy figure of a man, without much more appearance of strength than of activity; and yet, although a bad leaper, by no means a slothful looking person neither. He has very large eyes, in shape not unlike Coleridge's, but without the least of the same mysterious depth of expression. Altogether, his face is one which, at first sight, you would pronounce to be merely a coarse one; but in which, once informed to whom it belongs, you are at no loss to discover a thousand marks of vigorous intellect and fancy too. Of this last quality, indeed, his eyes are at all times full to overflowing. In the midst of the sombre gravity of his usual look, there are always little flashes of enthusiasm breaking through the cloud, and, I think, adorning it; and, in this respect, he forms a striking contrast to the calm, tranquil uniformity of Mr. P——'s physiognomy and deportment. In thinking of this afterwards, I could not help recollecting a great many passages of richly-coloured writing in his scientific Essays in the Edinburgh Review, which, I remember, struck me at the time I first read them, as being rather misplaced. But this, perhaps, may be merely the effect of the sterile way of writing employed by almost all the philosophers of these late times, to which we have now become so much accustomed, that we with difficulty approve of any thing in a warmer taste, introduced into such kinds of disquisition. They managed these things better in Greece.

By and bye, we were summoned to the drawing-room, where we found several ladies with Mrs. J——. She, you know, is an American, and J—— went across the Atlantic for her a few years ago, while we were at war with her country. She is a very pleasing person; and they have one extremely interesting little girl. J—— made no alteration in

his dress, but joined the ladies exactly in his morning costume,—the little green jacket aforesaid, grey worsted pantaloons, and Hessian boots, and a black silk handkerchief. How had Grub-street stared to see the prince of reviewers in such a garb! The dinner was excellent—a glorious turbot and oyster sauce for one thing; and (*sitesco referens*) there was no want of champaigne—the very wine, by the way, which I should have guessed to be Jeffrey's favourite. It is impossible to conceive of him as being a lover of the genuine old black-strap, or even of the quiet balminess of Burgundy. The true reviewing diet is certainly champaigne, and devilled biscuit. Had there been any blue-stocking lady present, she would have been sadly shocked with the material cast of the conversation during dinner—not a single word about

"The sweet new poem!"

Most of the company, though all men of literary habits, seemed to be as alive to the delights of the table, as if they had been "*let in*" (to use Dandie's phrase) by Monsieur Viard,—knowing in sauces, and delightfully reviewing every glass before they would suffer it to go down. It put me in mind of some lines of my friend W——. 'Tis a bookseller that speaks—

"The days of Tonson, Lintot, Curll, are over,
'Tis now your author's time to live on clover.

The time's gone by when we our coaches kept,
And authors were contented with umbrellas—
When pairs of epic bards in hay-lofts slept,
Too glad if cantos two could fill two bellies—
When we could always dinner intercept,
Unless the quire was covered—Happy fellows!
When first a champaigne cork was taught to fly
At a reviewer's touch—our reign was by."*

The introduction of the claret and desert made, for a long

* Modern Dunciad, Canto II.

time, very little alteration in the subject matter of discourse; but by degrees the natural feelings and interests of the company did begin to shine through the cloud of *babillage*, and various matters, in which I was much better pleased to hear their opinions, were successively tabled—none of them, however, with the least appearance of what the Scotch very expressively call *fore-thought*. Every thing went on with the utmost possible facility, and, in general, with a very graceful kind of lightness. The whole tone of Mr. J——'s own conversation, indeed, was so pitched, that a *proser*, or a person at all ambitious, in the green-room phrase, to *make an effect*, would undoubtedly have found himself most grievously out of place. Amidst all this absence of "*preparation*," however, (for it is impossible to talk of conversation without using French words,)—I have never, I believe, heard so many ideas thrown out by any man in so short a space of time, and apparently with such entire negation of exertion. His conversation acted upon me like the first delightful hour after taking opium. The thoughts he scattered so readily about him (his words, rapid, and wonderfully rapid as they are, appearing to be continually panting after his conceptions)—his thoughts, I say, were at once so striking, and so just, that they took in succession entire possession of my imagination, and yet with so felicitous a *tact* did he forbear from expressing any one of these too fully, that the reason was always kept in a pleasing kind of excitement, by the endeavour more thoroughly to examine their bearings. It is quite impossible to listen to him for a moment, without recalling all the best qualities of his composition—and yet I suspect his conversation is calculated to leave one with even a higher idea of his mind, at least of its fertility, than the best of his writings. I have heard some men display more profoundness of reflection, and others a much greater command of the conversational picturesque—but I never before witnessed any thing to be compared with the blending together of apparently little consistent powers in the whole strain of his discourse. Such a power, in the first place, of throwing away at once every useless part of

the idea to be discussed, and then such a happy redundancy of imagination to present the essential and reserved part in its every possible relation, and point of view—and all this connected with so much of the plain *sçavoir faire* of actual existence, and such a thorough scorn of mystification, it is really a very wonderful intellectual coalition. The largeness of the views suggested by his speculative understanding, and the shrewdness with which his sound and close judgment seems to scrutinize them after they are suggested—these alone would be sufficient to make his conversation one of the most remarkable things in the world. But then he invests all this ground-work with such a play of fancy, wit, sarcasm, *persiflage*, every thing in that way except humour—which again, were they united in any person entirely devoid either of the depth or the justness of J——'s intellect, would unquestionably render that person one of the most fascinating of all possible companions. The Stagyrite, who places his *summum bonum* in having one's faculties kept at work, would certainly have thought himself in Elysium, had he been so fortunate as to discuss a flask of Chian in company with Mr. J——.

The mere animal spirits of the man are absolutely miraculous. When one considers what a life of exertion he has led for these last twenty years; how his powers have been kept on the rack such a length of time with writing, and concocting, and editing reviews on the one hand, and briefs, and speeches, and journeys, and trials, and cross-questionings, and the whole labyrinth of barristership on the other—one cannot help being quite thunderstruck on finding that he has still reserved such a large fund of energy which he can afford and delight to lavish, when even the comparative repose of his mind would be more than enough to please and satisfy every one. His vigour seems to be a perfect widow's cruise, bubbling for ever upwards, and refusing to be exhausted—swelling and spreading till all the vessels of the neighbourhood are saturated, and more than saturated, with the endless unwearied irrigation of its superfluous richness.

Mr. P—— was the only other person whose conversation

made any very striking impression on me—but indeed this might well be the case, without the least reflection on the talents of those present. This gentleman's mode of talking is just as different as possible from his friend's—it is quietly, simply, unaffectedly sensible, and that is all one thinks of it at first—but by degrees he says things, which although at the moment he utters them, they do not produce any very startling effect, have the power to keep one musing on them for a long time after he stops—so that, even if one were not told who he is, I believe one would have no difficulty in discovering him to be a great man. The gravity of his years—the sweet unassuming gentleness of his behaviour—and the calm way in which he gave utterance to thoughts, about which almost any other person would have made so much bustle—every thing about the appearance and manners of this serene and venerable old man has left a feeling of quiet, respectful, and affectionate admiration upon my mind. I brought him into town in the shandrydan, and he has asked me to dine with him in the beginning of next week. I mean before the time, to go and hear him deliver one of his lectures, and shall tell you what I think of it—although, considering the subject of which he treats, you may perhaps feel no great anxiety to hear my opinion.

I declare the wine here is superb. I think some of J——'s Château-Margout beats the lot you bought at Colonel Johnes's all to nothing—don't take this in dudgeon.

Ever your's,

P. M.

LETTER VIII.

TO THE REV. D. W.

Oman's, Tuesday Evening.

DEAR DAVID,

I AM rather surprised that you should already begin to call upon me for disquisition, when you may well suppose I

have still so many interesting descriptions to give you. I have now seen, not one or two, but a great number of those eminent persons who confer so much honour upon the present condition of Scotland, and of whom you yourself have so often talked to me in terms of ardent curiosity. I assure you, but, indeed, why should I waste words to do so, that the extraordinary talents of these men are as far as possible from losing by a close inspection of their manners. The tone of that society, which they have necessarily had so great a share in forming, is as free as possible from the influence of that spirit of jealousy and constraint which I have observed operating in some other cities, in such a way as to prevent men of genius from doing justice to themselves, elsewhere than in their writings. Hereafter, indeed, I shall have occasion to say something of the spirit of party in Scotland, and to show with what destructive violence it attacks the very essence of cordial communion among some of the less considerable classes of society. Nay, I fear, from what I already see, that I shall find some little occasion to lament the insidious and half unsuspected influences of the same spirit among those who should be more above its working. But in the social intercourse of most of the men of literary eminence whom I have as yet seen, the absence of all feeling of party appears to be quite as entire as that of some other, and yet more offensive feelings which are elsewhere sufficiently manifest in their effects; and the principles, as well as the reputation of the one of such men, appear to act in no other way upon the other, than as gentle stimulants of his intellect, and of his courtesy.

My friend W——, as I have already whispered, not only forms, but glories in forming, an exception to this sort of behaviour. He utterly hates a Whig and a Calvinist, and he has no scruple about saying as much upon every occasion. He abominates the style of complaisant smoothness, with which some, who entertain many of his own opinions, are accustomed to treat those whom he calls by no better name than *the Adversaries;* and complains, indeed, with an air of

gravity, which I should not have expected in any man of his understanding, that by this species of conduct, the *Great Cause itself*, (by which he means the cause of true religion and true patriotism, as united and inseparable,) has sustained, is sustaining, and is likely to sustain injuries of a more dangerous character than its unassisted enemies alone could have any power of inflicting. He has a two-fold argument on this head. "In the first place," says he, "the utterly ignorant and uninformed, who must constitute the great majority of every nation, and the half ignorant and conceited, who constitute an infinitely larger proportion of the Scotch than of any other nation under heaven—and who, wherever they may be found, are a far more despicable, though no doubt, a more dangerous class than that upon which they think themselves entitled to look down—all these people, 'thick as the leaves in Vallambrosa,' are, in spite of themselves, mightily influenced in all things by the example of the few men of true genius and learning their country does contain. They see the external kindness with which these men treat the persons of their enemies, and it is no wonder that they care not to make nice distinctions between persons and principles for themselves. In the second place, says he, the good cavalier himself cannot keep company with roundheads—no, nor the good son of the true church cannot consort in familiarity with the relics of the cold-blooded covenanters on the one hand, or with those of the equally cold-blooded sceptic and infidel tribe on the other, without losing somewhat of the original purity of his affectionate faith. For my part, he concludes, I will do no harm to others or to myself, by such rash and unworthy obsequiences." The plain English of all which is, perhaps, nothing more than that my good friend is too great a bigot to be capable of feeling much happiness in the presence of men who differ from him on points which he considers as of so much importance, and that he is willing, in avoiding their company, to cover his true motives from his acquaintance, in part it may be from

himself, by the assumption of others, to which, in truth, he has little legitimate pretensions.

Be all this as it may, W—— is, without doubt, the keenest Tory in Scotland; indeed, I believe I should not go far from the truth, should I say, that his Toryism both far more smells of the old cavalier school, and is far more keen and intolerant, than that of any man of superior attainments, I ever met with on either side of the Tweed. A Scotsman of genuine talents, who sincerely entertains such opinions, may perhaps claim no inconsiderable indulgence, although the present condition of his country should affect him with feelings of aversion, almost of loathing, toward politicians of another kind, such as would be altogether unpardonable in an English Tory. In our part of the island, thank God, the pedigree of right thoughts has at no period been interrupted; and never, I firmly believe, did the venerable tree present a more imposing spectacle of bloom and vigour than at the present. In literature, as in every other walk of exertion and department of life, the Tories have, at least, their equal share of power and of honour. In the church, their principles are maintained by a mighty majority of a clergy, whom even their enemies will acknowledge to be the most learned in the world, and who, whatever may be their comparative deficiencies in some other respects, are certainly far more intimately connected with the thoughts and feelings of the most important classes of society, than any clerical body in Europe ever was; and therefore, it may be presumed, more likely to exert a continued and effectual influence upon the public mind of their country. In the law, where the encouragement for talent alone is such, that no man of high talents can be suspected of easily sacrificing his judgment for the hopes of favour, the superiority is almost as apparent as in the church, and Shepherd stands as much alone among the younger, as our excellent Chancellor does among the elder part of the profession. In literature, they have no lack of splendid names. They have an equal proportion of those who carry on the immediate and more noisy conflict; and a far over-balancing array

of such as are likely to be remembered hereafter for the stable and enduring triumphs of their genius. They have Canning and Frere among the wits—they have Wordsworth and Coleridge in poetry—and they have the unwearied and inexhaustible Southey in every thing. They have no reason either to be ashamed of their front, or apprehensive of their success; and therefore they can have no excuse for carrying farther than is absolutely necessary, the measure of their hostility toward those who do not muster beneath their banner. I before suspected in part, and I now have seen enough thoroughly to convince me, that in each and all of these points, this quarter of the island presents unhappily a contrast as striking as possible to the condition of our own.

I shall not at present enter upon any thing like a review of the past history of political feeling in Scotland, because I expect ere long to find myself better enabled than I now am to attempt something of this kind; and, at the same time, by laying before you the results of my inquiries into the nature both of the religion and the education of Scotland, to afford you somewhat of a key to its interpretation. In the meantime, however, nothing can be more certain than the superiority of the Whigs in the Scottish literature of the present day; nor is their superiority a whit less decisive in the law, the only profession which, in Scotland, exerts any great or general authority over the opinions of the higher classes of society. As for the church, of which I propose to give you a full account hereafter, and of which, in regard to its influence among the mass of the people, I am inclined to entertain a very high respect—the truth is, the clergy of Scotland are, at the present day, possessed of comparatively little power over the opinions of the best educated classes of their countrymen. One very efficient cause of this want of influence is, without doubt, the insignificant part they have of late taken in general literature; their neglect, in other words, their strange and unprecedented neglect of an engine, which, among a people whose habits at all resemble those of the present Scots, must ever be, of all others, the most extensive in

its sway. Such as the influence of the churchmen is, they are all Presbyterians and Calvanists, and so, in spite of themselves, they are, and must be Whigs. A few, indeed, may endeavour to persuade themselves and others they are Tories; but they wear the cloak of Geneva, and they are the descendants of John Knox—and that is sufficient. They may, if they choose, attempt to depart from the views of their predecessors, but the whole history of their sect is against them; and the shrewd sagacity of those to whom they address themselves, will at all times find a pleasing exercise in drawing invidious comparisons at their expense. But my business now is with the literati, and I am wandering from my text.

There never was any man more fitted, by the general structure of his genius, for seizing and possessing an extensive dominion over Scottish intellect, than David Hume. He was very nearly the *beau ideal* of the national understanding, and had he stood in any thing like the same relation to some other parts of the national character, without all question he might have produced works which would have been recognized by them as complete pictures of their mode of thinking and feeling, and which would, therefore, have obtained a measure of influence exactly coincident with the extent of their national existence. The defect of feeling in his composition, which has prevented his books from attaining the power which their genius might otherwise have commanded, was by no means hostile to the early diffusion of his celebrity; but it has acted with the force of a terrible lever, in pulling him down from that height of authority to which the spring of his originality at first elevated him. The empire which he at once framed to himself in the region of the speculative understanding of his countrymen, has not, indeed, been taken away; but the tyrannous interference, by which this empire at first contrived almost to swallow up every authority in its vicinity, has now received many checks, and, I should hope, bids fair to be ere long entirely discontinued. The only points on which David's character seems to have found any room for ardent feeling, were the ideas of ancient loyal-

ty and attachment to the blood of his native princes. This was a strange anomaly in the composition of so frigid an observer of human affairs. We hear it usually said, that it could have arisen only from the influence of early education; but even so, the wonder remains undiminished, how he, who threw off all other youthful prejudices with so much facility, should have continued to embalm this alone in the very recesses of his heart. I am rather inclined to be of opinion, that David had really persuaded himself, by the exercise of his speculative understanding, that the greatest danger to which his country was likely to be exposed, would be nothing else than a too great dereliction of those ideas, on which the national character and constitution had been formed, and determined, in his capacity of philosopher, to make use of his powers as a historian to controvert, and, if possible, counterbalance this perilous tendency of his times. In the mysteries of Revealed Religion, there was something so very offensive to the unsatiable inquisitiveness of his mind, that he could not so far overcome his aversion as to allow of any free use of his judgment, in regard to the impropriety and impolicy of attacking ideas so interwoven with the essence of the national character both of Englishmen and Scotsmen. He, therefore, continued to write against Christianity, and, if his conscience visited him with any passing touches of contrition, as, indeed, I think, his writings prove abundantly to have been the case, it is probable he contrived to re-instate himself in his own good graces, by reflecting on the zeal with which he had fought the good fight of loyalty. But the truth is, that his consolation, if such there might be, was a very deceitful thing; for David Hume had spared no pains in convulsing the whole soil, wherein feelings both religious and national had taken root; and others saw well enough, although he himself might not, the absurdity of his undertaking to preserve, in the midst of the ruin occasioned by his own exertions, any particular item of that produce, for the sum total of which he had manifested so little reverence. In spite, therefore, of all his mas-

terly genius—in spite of his style, unrivalled in English, or, perhaps, in any modern literature—and in spite, above all, of the attachment felt by a vast number of his readers, for the very notions whose advocate he is—in spite of all that nature and art could do, the Devil has been too strong for David; and the Prince of Sceptics has himself been found the most potent instrument for diminishing, almost for neutralising, the true and grave influence of the Prince of Historians.

The doctrine of trying every thing by the standard of mere utility, which was set on foot anew with so much success by David Hume, Adam Smith, and the other philosophers of their sect, was undoubtedly the most dangerous present ever conferred by men of high and powerful intellects upon the herd of the species. It is no wonder that a doctrine, so flattering to the mean compass of every coarse understanding, should have been received with the utmost readiness by the whole crowd of *Scioli*. But it is to my mind a very great wonder, that a person of such fine acumen as David Hume, should not have foreseen what a sad misapplication of his theory must be the infallible result of the weak and limited nature of those, for whose reception it was so admirably fitted. Hume himself, indeed, furnished many examples (such we conceive them to be) of the danger which must attend the application of that theory, even in the hands of the ablest of men—enough to convince those capable of examining him and his disciples, that the doctrine may, indeed, be a true one, but that it would require intellects of a very different construction from our's, to make any satisfactory use of it. It might have been forgiven to David, had he overlooked his own incapacities only; but it is no easy matter to discover by what strange mist his clear and piercing eye has been blinded to those of a species, of whose nature he was, in other instances, so far from over-rating the excellencies.—There can be little doubt, however, that what he wanted power to foresee and guard against, had he lived to taste the experience of a few succeeding years, he would have un-

derstood abundantly, and repented, too, in the retrospect. But, as Faustus says,

> "O what is intellect?—a strange, strange web—
> How bright the embroidery—but how dark the woof!"

Could we be permitted to correct our errors, we should no longer be men; nay, the poet, you know, has gone even farther than this, when he says,

> Τῶν δὲ πεπραγμένων
> Ἐν δίκᾳ τι καὶ παρὰ δίκαν
> Ἀτοιτον οὐδὲν
> Χρόνος ὁ πάντων πατὴρ
> Δυνατὸ θέμεν ἔργον τέλος.

As the Scotch nation could boast of no great philosophical names before the appearance of Hume, one cannot be surprised, that they should have felt a very lively pride in the display of his admirable powers. It is a thousand, and ten thousand pities, that the admiration we can scarcely blame them for according to him, might not have been gratified at less expense to themselves. I fear, indeed, there is but too much reason for suspecting, that the influence he has obtained both among them and others, will outlive many generations; although it is sufficiently amusing to observe in his writings, the quiet sort of confidence with which he himself looked forward to his literary immortality—not much doubting, it would appear, that the name of David Hume would continue to be reverenced by all persons of understanding many centuries after the Christian religion should have ceased to be talked of, excepting as one of the many hundred antediluvian and exploded species of superstition. Whatever may be his future fate, this much is quite certain, that the general principles of his philosophy still continue to exert a mighty influence over by far the greatest part of the literary men of his country; and that almost the only subject on which these his pious disciples dare to apply his principles in a different way from what he himself exemplified—is that of politics. Among

them, as indeed I have hinted already, David's Toryism is always talked of, as one little foible which should not be too hardly thought of in the character of so great a man. The fund of jokes which he has given them the means of employing against himself, is sufficiently obvious; but such as they are, the jokes are uniformly put in requisition, whenever the subject of conversation gives the least colour of excuse for their introduction. They are delighted with the notion, that, in one thing at least, they are wiser than their master; and it would almost be a pity to put an end to so much pleasantry.

P. M.

LETTER IX.

TO THE SAME.

Oman's.

DEAR WILLIAMS,

I SAW yesterday, for the first time, an original portrait of David Hume; and you, who know my physiognomical and cranioscopical mania, will easily believe that this was a high source of gratification to me. Really you are too severe in your comments on my passion for "the human head divine." I wish to God some plain, sensible man, with the true Baconian turn for observation, would set about devoting himself in good earnest to the calm consideration of the skulls and faces which come in his way. In the present stage of the science, there is no occasion that any man should subject himself to the suspicion or reproach of quackery, by drawing rash conclusions, or laying claims before the time, to the seer-like qualities, which a mature system of cranioscopy, well understood, would undoubtedly confer. All that can be done for a very long time, is, to note down the structure of men's heads in one page of a memorandum-book, and brief outlines of their characters, so far as these are known, in another. If fifty rational persons, in different re-

gions of Europe, would keep such books for a few years, and then submit the whole to be inspected by a committee of cool inquirers, there can be no doubt data enough would be found accumulated, either firmly to establish, or fairly, and for ever, to overturn the idea of such a system. Whatever might be the result, I cannot think but that the time devoted to the inquiries would be pleasantly, nay, profitably spent. The person engaged in such a study, I do not at all mean perpetually engaged in it, could not fail to extend his acquaintance with his own species; for he would be furnished with a stronger stimulus than is common, to be quick and keen-sighted in his scrutiny of individuals. I, for my part, have already my skull-book, and I flatter myself its pages, even now, might furnish no uninteresting subject of study. I promise you I intend to enrich it prodigiously before you have any opportunity of inspecting it.

The prints of David Hume are, most of them, I believe, taken from the very portrait I have seen; but, of course, the style and effect of the features are much more thoroughly to be understood, when one has an opportunity of observing them expanded in their natural proportions. The face is far from being in any respect a classical one. The forehead is chiefly remarkable for its prominence from the ear, and not so much for its height. This gives him a lowering sort of look forward, expressive of great inquisitiveness into matters of fact, and the consequences to be deduced from them. His eyes are singularly prominent, which, according to the Gallic system, would indicate an extraordinary development of the organ of language behind them. His nose is too low between the eyes, and not well or boldly formed in any other respect. The lips, although not handsome, have, in their fleshy and massy outlines, abundant marks of habitual reflection and intellectual occupation. The whole has a fine expression of intellectual dignity, candour, and serenity. The want of elevation, however, which I have already noticed, injures very much the effect even of the structure of the lower part of the head. It takes away all idea of the presence of the highest

and most god-like elements of which our nature is capable. In the language of the German doctor, it denotes the non-development of the organ of veneration. It is to be regretted that he wore powder, for this prevents us from having the advantage of seeing what was the natural style of his hair—or, indeed, of ascertaining the form of any part of his head beyond the forehead. If I mistake not, this physiognomy accords very well with the idea you have formed of David Hume's character. Although he was rather fond of plaguing his theological contemporaries, there was not much of the fanaticism of infidelity about him. His object, in most cases, was to see what the mere power of ratiocination would lead to, and wherever he met with an illogical sequence of propositions, he broke it down without mercy. When he was led into ill-toned and improper feelings, it was chiefly by the intoxication of intellectual power, for there seems to have been much humanity and graciousness in his disposition.

In the same room, I saw also a portrait, by the same hand, of David's illustrious friend, and illustrious enemy, Jean Jacques. No person who sees their two heads in this juxtaposition, can help wondering by what circumstances these two men should ever have been led to imagine themselves capable of entertaining true feelings of friendship for each other. As well might one conceive of an alliance between the calm, cud-chewing, mild-eyed cow of the meadow, and the wild, fierce, untamed and untameable leopard or panther of the jungle. Rousseau is represented in his usual fantastic Armenian garb, a loose flowing brown vest or caftan, and a high furred bonnet on his head. This last piece of dress mingles itself admirably with his wiry hair, twisted and convolved, as if it grew through a skin that had no rest—and both harmonize, as well as possible, with the thin, pale, melancholy visage, the narrow irascible lips, the black wandering impenetrable eye, and the thick jetty eyebrows drawn together with such a look of visionary suspiciousness. One sees little of the forehead itself, but the bonnet gives the effect of great elevation, and such, I doubt not, was the truth, could we look

below. What an eloquent expression of self-tormenting imagination! It seems, as if all thoughts came to that mysterious receptacle, and few could find there any resting place. Enthusiasm, with the strong wing, and the kingly eye of the eagle—the meaner ferocity of the kite—and passionate dreams, soft as the pinions of a dove—and broken touches of melody, more melting than the music of nightingales. Most strange, most unintelligible of men! what glimpses of more than earthly happiness must he have experienced, when, in the glory of his strength, he tossed from him for a time his besetting infirmities, and allowed his free spirit to soar and hover at its will! What more than mortal anguish, in the degredation and subjection of that which was capable of so ærial a flight—the imprisonment of the King of the Air! What wonder, that when mean thoughts festered in his nobler soul, he should have deemed all men traitors to his liberty, and poured his burning curses on them through the self-raised bars of his visionary dungeon! Alas! how easy to condemn, how difficult to sympathise in, the abberrations of such a spirit!

The gentle, inflexible, intellectual David—the most consistent of men—how should he have been the friend, the companion, of this phrenzied enthusiast? How could these men have understood each other?—their very eyes speak languages which have scarce two words in common. In infidelity—the only point of their agreement, Hume was far more different from Rousseau, than half the Christians in the world are from half the infidels. They fought against different parts of the system, and they fought with different weapons. There was more danger by far to be dreaded from the Scot than the Swiss. His onset, indeed, was not attended with so much of the spectacular and imposing circumstances of combat—his troops were of a more still and quiet disposition, but they made their attacks with more cunning skill, and the effects of their impious triumphs have been far more durable and deadly. The high and lofty parts of man's nature, which Rousseau audaciously enlisted against the Bible, struggled, for a season, with all the clamours of determinate warfare;

but they are the natural allies of that which they assaulted, and throughout the world they have long since returned devoutly to their old allegiance.

In Scotland, for I am still here, the nature of the conflict has, I fear, corrupted even those that fought on the right side. Religion is too exclusively defended by arms of the same kind with those which attacked her. But I have no room at present to enter upon this.

P. M.

LETTER X.

TO THE REV. DAVID WILLIAMS.

Dear David,

I told you that Mr. S—— sent me a letter of introduction to Mr. M——, *the Man of Feeling*, and I need not tell you, that such an introduction to such a man, was as agreeable a circumstance as any that could have fallen in my way. I made all haste to deliver my credentials, but was told, when I called at his house, that the old gentleman had gone out a-riding. I really had no expectation of hearing his absence accounted for in that way, for I had always been accustomed to think of him as of one who had entirely outlived all his contemporaries, and who must, therefore, be long past the years of active exertion. My surprise, however, was an agreeable one, and I prepared myself to find the veteran, when I should have the fortune to see him, a yet more interesting person than I had taught myself to look for.

Yesterday morning I received a note from him, in which he apologized for not having immediately returned my call. He was extremely busy, he said, all the morning, but hoped I would come and dine with him in an unceremonious manner, the first day I found myself disengaged. I had half promised to dine at a tavern with one or two young gentlemen, friends of W——; but my curiosity was such, that I forth-

with excused myself in that quarter, and accepted Mr. M——'s invitation for the same day on which it reached me. I assure you, that I should not have grudged my journey to Scotland, although I had laid up nothing to bring back with me, excepting the recollection of this one day.

As I walked in the direction of his house, with the certainty that a few minutes walk would bring me into his company, I was conscious of an almost superstitious feeling—a mysterious kind of expectation—something like what I can conceive to have been felt by the Armenian, when the deep green curtain hung before him, the uplifting of which, he was assured, would open to him a view into departed years, and place before his eyes the actual bodily presence of his long buried ancestor. I had read his works when yet in the years of my infancy. The beautiful visions of his pathetic imagination had stamped a soft and delicious, but deep and indelible impression on my mind, long before I had heard the very name of criticism; perhaps before any of the literature of the present age existed—certainly long, very long, before I ever dreamt of its existence. The very names of the heroes and heroines of his delightful stories sounded in my ears like the echoes of some old romantic melody, too simple, and too beautiful to have been framed in these degenerate over-scientific days. Harley—La Roche—Montalban—Julia de Roubigné—what graceful mellow music is in the well remembered cadences—the "παλαιων ονοματ' αειδων!" And I was, in truth, to see "in the flesh" the hoary magician, whose wand had called those etherial creations into everlasting being. A year before, I should have entertained almost as much hope of sitting at the same table with Goldsmith, or Sterne, or Addison, or any of those mild spirits so far removed from our nature "οι νυν βροτοι εσμεν." For the first time in my life, I could not help being ashamed of my youth, and feeling, as if it were presumption in me to approach, in the garb of modern days, the last living relics of that venerable school.

The appearance of the fine old man had no tendency to

dissipate the feelings I have just attempted to describe. I found him in his library, surrounded with a very large collection of books—few of them apparently new ones—seated in a high-backed easy chair—the wood work carved very richly in the ancient French taste, and covered with black hair cloth. On his head he wore a low cap of black velvet, like those which we see in almost all the pictures of Pope. But there needed none of these accessories to carry back the imagination. It is impossible that I should paint to you the full image of that face. The only one I ever saw which bore any resemblance to its character, was that of Warren Hastings—you well remember the effect it produced, when he appeared among all that magnificent assemblage, to take his degree at the installation of Lord Grenville. In the countenance of M——, there is the same clear transparency of skin, the same freshness of complexion, in the midst of all the extenuation of old age. The wrinkles, too, are set close to each other, line upon line; not deep and bold, and rugged, like those of most old men, but equal and undivided over the whole surface, as if no touch but that of Time had been there, and as if even He had traced the vestiges of his dominion with a sure, indeed, but with a delicate and reverential finger. The lineaments have all the appearance of having been beautifully shaped, but the want of his teeth has thrown them out of their natural relation to each other. The eyes alone have bid defiance to the approach of the adversary. Beneath bleached and hoary brows, and surrounded with innumerable wrinkles, they are still as tenderly, as brightly blue, as full of all the various eloquence and fire of passion, as they could have been in the most vivacious of his days, when they were lighted up with that purest and loftiest of all earthly flames, the first secret triumph of conscious and conceiving genius.

By and by, Mr. M—— withdrew into his closet, and having there thrown off his slippers, and exchanged his cap for a brown wig, he conducted me to the drawing room. His family were already assembled to receive us—his wife, just as

I should have wished to picture her, a graceful old lady, with much of the remains of beauty, clothed in an open gown of black silk, with deep flounces, and having a high cap, with the lace meeting below the chin—his eldest son, a man rather above my own standing, who is said to inherit much of the genius of his father, (although he has chosen to devote it to very different purposes—being very eminent among the advocates of the present time)—and some younger children. The only visiter, beside myself, was an old friend, and, indeed, cotemporary of M——, a Mr. R——, who was, in his time, at the head of the profession of the law in Scotland; but who has now lived for many years in retirement. I have never seen a finer specimen, both in appearance and manners, of the true gentleman of the last age. In his youth, he must have been a perfect model of manly beauty; and, indeed, no painter could select a more exquisite subject for his art even now. His hair combed back from his forehead and highly powdered, his long queue, his lace ruffles, his suit of snuff-coloured cloth, cut in the old liberal way, with long flaps to his waistcoat, his high-heeled shoes and rich steel-buckles—every thing was perfectly in unison with the fashion of his age. The stately and measured decorum of his politeness was such, as could not well be displayed by any man dressed in our free-and-easy style; but in him it did not produce the least effect of stiffness or coldness. It was a delightful thing to see these two old men, who had rendered themselves eminent in two so different walks of exertion, meeting together in the quiet evening of their days, to enjoy in the company of each other every luxury which intellectual communication can afford, heightened by the yet richer luxury of talking over the feelings of times to which they almost alone are not strangers.

They are both perfectly men of the world, so that there was not the least tinge of professional pedantry in their conversation. As for Mr. M——, indeed, literature was never any thing more than an amusement to him, however great the figure he has made in it, and the species of literature in

which he excelled was, in its very essence, connected with any ideas rather than those of secluded and artist-like abstraction. There was nothing to be seen which could have enabled a stranger to tell which was the great lawyer, and which the great novellist. I confess, indeed, I was a little astonished to find, from Mr. M——'s mode of conversation, how very little his habits had ever been those of a mere literary man. He talked for at least half an hour, and, I promise you, very knowingly, about flies for angling; and told me, with great good humour, that he still mounts his poney in autumn, and takes the field against the grouse, with a long fowling-piece slung from his back, and a pointer bitch, to the full as venerable among her species as her affectionate master is among his. The lively vivacity with which he talked over various little minute circumstances of his last campaign in the moors, and the almost boyish keenness with which he seemed to be looking forward to the time of trouting—all this might have been looked upon as rather frivolous, and out of place, in another of his years; but, for my part, I could not help being filled both with delight and admiration, by so uncommon a display of elasticity in the springs of his temperament.

He gave us an excellent bottle of Muscat-de-Rives-altes during dinner, and I must say I am inclined very much to approve of that old-fashioned delicacy. We had no lack of Château-la-Rose afterwards, and neither of the old gentlemen seemed to have the slightest objection to its inspiration. A truly charming air of sober hilarity was diffused over their features, and they began to give little sketches of the old times, in which, perhaps, their hilarity might not always be so sober, in a way that carried me back delightfully to the very heart of "High-jinks." According to the picture they gave, the style of social intercourse in this city, in their younger days, seems, indeed, to have been wonderfully easy and captivating. At that time, you must know, not one stone of the New Town, in which they, and all the fashionable inhabitants of Edinburgh now reside, had been erected. The whole of the genteel population lived crowded together in

those tall citadels of the Old Town, from one of which my friend W—— still refuses to be dislodged. Their houses were small, but abundantly neat and comfortable, and the labour which it cost to ascend to one of them was sure to be repaid at all hours by a hearty welcome from its possessor. The style of visiting, altogether, was as different as possible from the ceremonious sort of fashion now in vogue. They did not deal in six weeks' invitations and formal dinners; but they formed, at a few hours' notice, little snug supper-parties, which, without costing any comparative expense, afforded opportunities a thousand-fold for all manner of friendly communication between the sexes. As for the gentlemen, they never thought of committing any excess, except in taverns, and at night; and Mr. R—— mentioned, that, almost within his own recollection, it had been made matter of very serious aggravation in the offence of a gentleman of rank, tried before the Court of Justiciary, that he had allowed his company to get drunk in his house before it was dark, even in the month of July. At that time, the only liquor was claret, and this they sent for just as they wanted it—huge pewter jugs, or, as they called them, *stoups* of claret, being just as commonly to be seen travelling the streets of Edinburgh in all directions *then*, as the mugs of Mieux and Barclay are in those of London *now*. Of course, I made allowance for the privilege of age; but I have no doubt there was abundance of good wit, and, what is better, good-humour among them, no less than of good claret. If I were to take the evening I spent in listening to its history, as a fair specimen of the "Auld Time," (and after all, why should I not?) I should almost be inclined to reverse the words of the Laureate, and to say,

> —— "of all places, and all times of earth,
> Did fate grant choice of time and place to men,
> Wise choice might be their SCOTLAND, and their THEN."

I assure you, however, that I returned to my hotel in no disposition to quarrel either with time or place, or "any other

creature"—a bottle of excellent wine under my belt, and my mind richly dieted with one of the true *Noctes Cœnæque.*

Ever your's,

P. M.

P. S. I had forgotten to mention, that both M—— and his friend are staunch Tories; but I don't deny, that this might have some effect in increasing my love for them.

LETTER XI.

TO THE SAME.

I HEARD it mentioned at Mr. M——'s, that a triennial dinner, in honour of Robert Burns, was about to take place; and thinking it would be a good opportunity for me to see a larger number of Scots literati than I had yet met with collected together, I resolved, if possible, to make one of the party. I found, on inquiring, that in consequence of the vast multitude of persons who wished to be present, the original plan of the dinner had been necessarily departed from, and the company were to assemble, not in a tavern, for no tavern in Edinburgh could accommodate them, but in the Assembly-Rooms in George-Street. Even so, I was told, there was likely to be a deficiency rather than a superfluity of room; and, indeed, when I went to buy my ticket, I found no more remained to be sold. But I procured one afterwards through Mr. M——; and W—— arriving from the country the same day, I went to the place in company with him. He is hand in glove with half of the stewards, and had no difficulty in getting himself smuggled in. I send you a copy of the Edinburgh Weekly Journal, which contains the best newspaper account of the affair I have met with, but shall proceed to favour you with a few of my own observations in addition.

Those who are accustomed to talk and think of the Scotch

as a cold phlegmatic people, would have been convinced of their mistake by a single glance at the scene which met my eyes when I entered. I have never witnessed a more triumphant display of national enthusiasm, and had never expected to witness any display within many thousand degrees of it, under any thing else than the instantaneous impulse of some glorious victory. The room is a very large one, and I had already seen it lighted up in all the splendour of a ball; but neither its size nor its splendour had then made any thing more than a very common-place impression on my mind. But now—what a sight was here! A hall of most majestic proportions—its walls, and hangings, and canopies of crimson, giving a magical richness of effect to the innumerable chandeliers with which its high roof appeared to be starred and glowing—the air overhead alive with the breath of lutes and trumpets—below, the whole mighty area paved with human faces, (for the crowd was such that nothing of the tables could at first be seen,)—the highest, and the wisest, and the best of a nation assembled together—and all for what? to do honour to the memory of one low-born peasant. What a lofty tribute to the true nobility of Nature!—What a glorious vindication of the born majesty of Genius!

With difficulty we procured seats at the lower extremity of the Hall, at the table where Captain A—— of the Navy presided as croupier—a fine manly looking fellow, with a world of cordial jollity in his face. W—— chose to sit at this table, as he afterwards told me, because, in the course of a long experience, he had found the fare of a public dinner uniformly much better in the immediate neighbourhood of the croupier or president; and, indeed, whatever might be the case elsewhere, the fare where we sat was most excellent. We had turbot in perfection—a haunch of prime venison—the red-deer I believe—and every thing, in short, which could have been selected to make a *private* dinner delicious. The port and sherry allowed by the traiteur were by no means to be sneezed at; but W—— had determined to make

himself as happy as possible, and his servant produced a bottle of hock and another of the sparkler during dinner. Afterwards, we exchanged our port for very tolerable claret, and we had filberts and olives at will; which being the case, *entre nous*, no man could complain of his desert.

The chair was occupied by Mr. M——, an advocate of considerable note; a pleasant gentlemanlike person, so far as I could judge, (for he was quite at the other end of the room from us,) and close around him were gathered a great number of the leading members of the same profession. Among the rest J——. A universal feeling of regret appeared to fill the company, on account of the absence of Mr. S——, who was expected to have taken his place at the right hand of the president, and would have come to town for the purpose had he not been prevented by a severe attack of illness. In different parts of the room, a variety of distinguished individuals, of whom I had often heard, were successively pointed out to me by W——; but it was some time before I could collect my senses, sufficiently to take any very accurate inspection of their physiognomies. Wherever I looked, I saw faces enobled by all the eloquence of a pure and lofty enthusiasm. It was evident, that all had the right feeling; and at such a moment it appeared to me a comparatively small matter which of them had the celebrity even of genius.

After dinner, the president rose and proposed *The Memory of the Poet.* The speech with which he prefaced the toast was delivered with all the ease of a practised speaker, and was by no means devoid of traces of proper feeling. But, I confess, on the whole, its effect was to me rather a disappointing one. The enthusiasm felt by the company was such, that nothing could have been pitched in a key too high for them; and the impression of Mr. M——'s address had certainly, in their state of feeling at the moment, more of a chilling than an elevating effect. I thought him peculiarly unhappy in the choice of a few poetical quotations with which he diversified his speech—that from Swift's Rhapsody,

in particular, was extremely unfortunate. What good effect could be produced on such an occasion as this, by repeating such lines as those about

> "Not beggar's brat on bulk begot,
> Not bastard of a pedlar Scot,
> Not boy brought up to cleaning shoes,
> The spawn of Bridwell or the stews,
> Not infants dropped the spurious pledges
> Of gypsies littering under hedges
> Are so disqualified by fate
> To rise in church, or law, or state,
> As he whom Phœbus in his ire,
> Has blasted with poetic fire," &c.

Nor were the fine verses of Milton much more appropriate to the occasion, although their own grandeur would probably have prevented them from being at all disagreeable in the hearing, had Mr. M——'s recollection been such as to enable him to recite them with facility. Whatever may be the case with the most of those, whose lips "Phœbus tips with fire," poor Burns was assuredly not one who neglected, for the sake of the Muses,

> "To sport with Amaryllis in the shade,
> Or with the tangles of Neæra's hair."

But it would be quite silly to trouble you with such *minutæ* as these; the true defect lay in selecting, to preside in such an assembly, upon such an occasion, any other than a man of great reputation and rank in literature. Had such a person been selected, and had he, as it might have happened, committed the very same faults which Mr. M—— did commit, the impression of his general character would still have been sufficient to prevent the company from regarding, otherwise than with a favourable eye, even the defects of one in whom they would have been eager and proud to recognize the intellectual kinsman of their great poet. But, in the first place, it is not easy to understand why a man should be chosen to direct and guide the enthusiasm of a meeting in honour of

Robert Burns, merely because he, himself, enjoys a tolerable degree of reputation as a Scottish barrister; and, in the second place, every point in which such a person so chosen fails in the discharge of his duties, has the effect of making men recur to this original difficulty, with an increasing and a most unpleasant pertinacity. There was, perhaps, an injudicious degree of courage in Mr. M——'s attempt; but "*eventus docuit.*"

It is a much easier thing, however, to say who should *not*, than who should have presided on this occasion. It seems that, among others, Mr. J—— had been talked of; but he had the good sense to reject the proposal without hesitation. And with what face, indeed, could he, the author of the longest, and most deliberate, and most elaborate attack that ever assailed the character of Burns—an attack of which, with all my tolerance for J——'s failings, I cannot help thinking the whole spirit and tone are radically and essentially abominable—with what face could he have presumed to occupy the first place in an assembly of men, whose sole bond of union could be nothing else than that feeling of deep, tender, and reverential admiration of poor Burns's memory, his own want of which had been so decidedly, or rather, so ostentatiously held forth? Many people can see some excuse—and I myself can imagine some explanation of the irreverent way in which Mr. J—— has accustomed himself to treat his own great poetical contemporaries. But I know not, neither can I imagine, upon what principle a man of his fine understanding, and fine feeling too, should have esteemed himself justifiable in concentrating the whole pitiless vigour of his satire upon the memory of one, whose failings, whatever they might be, were entitled to so much compassion as those of Robert Burns—in exhausting his quiver of poisoned shafts in piercing and lacerating the resting-place of one, whose living name must always be among the dearest and most sacred possessions of his countrymen. I cannot help thinking, that J—— displayed in that attack a very lamentable defect, not merely of nationality of feeling, but of humanity of feeling. If the

pride of being the countryman of Burns was not enough to make J—— a lenient observer of his errors, there were abundance of other considerations of a yet higher kind, which should not have come vainly to the aid of that honourable pride. Alas! how easy a thing is it for us, who have been educated in the atmosphere of ease—who have "been clothed in fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day"—how easy a thing is it for such as we are, to despise and deride the power of temptations, that might be enough, and more than enough, to unhinge all the resolutions, and darken all the destinies of one who had been accustomed, in good earnest, *to drink the water of bitterness, and eat his bread in the sweat of his brow!* It is an easy thing for those who have comfortable homes, and congenial occupations, to rail against the dissipated habits of a poor wandering poet, compelled to waste his best days in degrading drudgeries, and night after night to find himself surrounded in his own narrow dwelling by all the depressing and contracting squalors of penury.

The rule of judging as we would be judged, although an excellent one, surely, in the main, must be taken, I think, with a great *sequela* of exceptions. It is the besetting temptation of many natures, and honest natures too, to

> "Compound for sins they are inclined to,
> By damning those they have no mind to."

And perhaps few sins are more "damned" upon this principle than those of the bottle. You might as well attempt to make a deaf man comprehend the excellencies of Mozart, as to convince some people that it is a venial thing to be fond of an extra glass of claret. Many even of those who take great pleasure in society, can never be brought to understand why people should get tipsy when they meet together round a table. The delight which they experience in company, is purely rational—derived from nothing but the animated and invigorated collision of contending and sporting intellects. They have wit and wisdom for their share, and they have little reason to complain; but what do they know about the

full, hearty, glorious swing of jollity? How can they ever sympathise with the misty felicity of a man singing

"It is the moon—I ken her horn!"

I think no man should be allowed to say any thing about Burns, who has not joined in this chorus, although timber-tuned, and sat till day-light, although married.

The first healths (after some of mere formality) were those of the mother of Burns—for she, it seems, is still alive, in extreme old age; his widow, the "Jean," of his poetry—and his sons. A gentleman who proposed one of these toasts, mentioned a little anecdote, which gave infinite delight to all present, and which will do so to you. After the last of these triennial meetings, a pension of £50 *per annum* was settled on Mrs. Burns, by a Scottish gentleman of large fortune, Mr. Maule of Panmure. One of the sons of the poet, however, has since that time gone out to India in a medical capacity; and being fortunate enough to obtain a situation of some little emolument, the first use he made of his success was to provide for his mother, in such a way as enabled her to decline any farther continuance of Mr. Maule's bounty—conduct, as was well said, "worthy of the wife and son of the high-souled Burns"—one who, in spite of all his faults, and all his difficulties, contrived, in the true spirit of proud independence, *to owe no man any thing* when he died. By the way, the person who mentioned this was the same G—— T——, whose name is so intimately associated with that of Burns, in the great collection of Scots Music.

The health of Mr. Scott was then proposed, in terms of such warmth as might fit the occasion, by the Chairman. That of Mr. Mackenzie was given by Mr. C——, a celebrated advocate, and prefaced by some very elegant sentences respecting the early and effectual patronage extended by him to Burns in the Mirror. Mr. J—— then rose and proposed the health of Thomas Campbell, with a neat allusion to his late exquisite sketch of the character of Burns in the "Specimens." I assure you, nothing could be more appropriate;

or more delightful, than the way in which all these toasts were received by the company. But you will see well enough by the paper I have sent you, what toasts were given. I am sorry to say, that those which were *not* given, occupied not a little of my attention. It was obvious from the way in which things went on, that Mr. M——, Mr. J——, Mr. C——, and one or two of their friends among the stewards, had previously arranged among themselves what toasts should be proposed, and in what order; nor could the business of such a meeting be well conducted without some such preparation. I well knew before I went, that, as it happened, those gentlemen who took the chief direction in this affair, were all keen Whigs. But I never considered this as a circumstance of the slightest importance, nor expected, most assuredly, that it would at all show itself in the conduct of the assembly. I regarded politics and parties as things that had not the least connection with the purposes of the meeting, and expected, indeed, that they would have been most studiously kept out of view, for the very purpose of rendering the meeting as universally and genially delightful as possible. I was, however, sadly disappointed. It is needless to multiply examples. It is sufficient to mention, that not one of these Edinburgh Reviewers had the common candour or manliness, in a meeting, the object of which was so purely to do honour to poetical genius, to propose the health either of Wordsworth, or of Southey, or of Coleridge. I could not have believed that the influence of paltry prejudices could ever be allowed to control in such a way the conduct of men so well entitled to be above their sphere. Even by the confession of the Edinburgh Review itself, these men are three of the greatest poetical geniuses our island ever has produced. Their choice of subjects, their style of versification, and various other particulars, are ridiculed; but it is no where denied, that even their errors are entitled to derive some little shelter from the originality, power, and beauty, of the productions in which they make their appearance. I am indeed very much at a loss to comprehend, how any man of intelligence could satisfy his conscience,

that he did right in proposing, on such an occasion as this, the healths of Crabbe, Rogers, nay even of Montgomery, (for such was the case) and omitting to do the same honour to the great names I have mentioned. Surely here was a sad descent from that pure elevation on which the true critic, and the true philosopher, must ever stand. I had no conception previously of the real extent to which, in this country of political strife, the absurdities of party spleen are carried, even by men of eminence and virtue. I had no suspicion, that such a man as Mr. J——, or even as Mr. M——, would have dared to show, almost to confess himself, incapable of overlooking the petty discrepancies of political opinion, in forming his estimate of a great English poet's character. It is not thus that a man can hope to anticipate the judgment of posterity, or to exert a permanent sway over that of his contemporaries. In regard to J——, above all, I confess I was grieved to detect so much littleness, where I had been willing to look for very different things. I was grieved, indeed, to discover that he also, even out of his Review, is in a great measure one that

> ——— "narrows his mind,
> And to party gives up what was meant for mankind."

That Mr. J—— had found reason to change some of the opinions he had once expressed concerning Robert Burns, was, in part at least, admitted by himself, in one of the speeches he delivered on this very occasion. Nay, had it not been so, I am inclined to think it might have been better for him to have kept altogether away from the assembly. Having laid aside the worst of his prejudices against poor Burns, why should he not have been proud and joyful in finding and employing such an opportunity for doing justice to a great poet, who—himself the purest of men, and leading and having ever led the holiest and most dignified of lives—had not disdained to come forward at an earlier and a less triumphant period, as the defender and guardian of the reputation of his frailer brother? What had parties, and systems, and schools,

and nicknames, to do with such a matter as this? Are there no healing moments in which men can afford to be free from the fetters of their petty self-love? Is the hour of genial and cordial tenderness, when man meets man to celebrate the memory of one who has conferred honour on their common nature—is even that sacred hour to be polluted and profaned by any poisonous sprinklings of the week-day paltriness of life?—My displeasure, in regard to this affair, has very little to do with my displeasure in regard to the general treatment of Mr. Wordsworth, in the Edinburgh Review. That the poems of this man should be little read and little admired by the majority of those who claim for themselves the character of taste and intelligence—that they should furnish little, except subjects of mirth and scorn, to those who, by their own writings, would direct the judgment of others—these are things which affect some of his admirers with astonishment—they affect me with no sentiments but those of humility and grief. The delight which is conferred by vivid descriptions of stranger events and stronger impulses than we ourselves experience, is adapted for all men, and is an universal delight. That part of our nature to which they address themselves, not only exists in every man originally, but has its existence fostered and cherished by the incidents of every life. To find a man who has no relish for the poetry of Love or of War, is almost as impossible as to find one that does not enjoy the brightness of the sun, or the softness of moon-light. The poetry of ambition, hatred, revenge, pleases masculine minds in the same manner as the flashing of lightnings and the roaring of cataracts. But there are other things in man and in nature, besides tumultuous passions and tempestuous scenes—and he that is a very great poet, may be by no means a very popular one.

The critics who ridicule Mr Wordsworth, for choosing the themes of his poetry among a set of objects new and uninteresting to their minds, would have seen, had they been sufficiently acute, or would have confessed, had they been sufficiently candid, that, had he so willed it, he might have been

among the best and most powerful masters in other branches of his art, more adapted to the generality of mankind and for themselves. The martial music in the hall of Clifford was neglected by the Shepherd Lord, for the same reasons which have rendered the poet that celebrates him such a poet as he is.

> "Love had he seen in huts where poor men lie,
> His daily teachers had been woods and rills;
> The silence that is in the starry sky,
> The sleep that is among the lonely hills."

Before a man can understand and relish his poems, his mind must, in some measure, pass through the same sober discipline—a discipline that calms, but does not weaken the spirit—that blends together the understanding and the affections, and improves both by the mixture. The busy life of cities, the ordinary collisions of sarcasm and indifference, steel the mind against the emotions that are bred and nourished among those quiet valleys, so dear to the Shepherd Lord and his poet. What we cannot understand, it is a very common, and, indeed, a very natural thing, for us to undervalue; and it may be suspected, that some of the merriest witticisms which have been uttered against Mr. Wordsworth, have had their origin in the pettishness and dissatisfaction of minds unaccustomed and unwilling to make, either to others or to themselves, any confessions of incapacity.

But I am wandering sadly from him, who, as Wordsworth has beautifully expressed it,

> ———"walked in glory and in joy,
> Following his plough along the mountain side."

—However, I shall come back to him in my next.

P. M.

LETTER XII.

TO THE SAME.

DEAR DAVID,

IN order to catch the post a few days ago, I sent off my letter before my subject was half concluded; which, doubtless, you will attribute chiefly, or entirely, to my old passion for parentheses and episodes. To return to my *epos* —the Burn's dinner.

One of the best speeches, perhaps the very best, delivered during the whole of the evening, was that of Mr. J—— W——n, in proposing the health of the Ettrick Shepherd. I had heard a great deal of W——n from W——, but he had been out of Edinburgh ever since my arrival, and indeed had walked only fifty miles that very morning, in order to be present on this occasion, He showed no symptoms, however, of being fatigued with his journey, and his style of eloquence, above all, whatever faults it might have, displayed certainly no deficiency of freshness and vigour. As I know you admire some of his verses very much, you will be pleased with a sketch of his appearance. He is, I imagine, (but I guess principally from the date of his Oxford prize poem) some ten years your junior and mine—a very robust athletic man, broad across the back—firm set upon his limbs —and having altogether very much of that sort of air which is inseparable from the consciousness of great bodily energies. I suppose, in leaping, wrestling, or boxing, he might easily beat any of the poets, his contemporaries—and I rather suspect, that in speaking, he would have as easy a triumph over the whole of them, except Coleridge. In complexion, he is the best specimen I have ever seen of the genuine or ideal *Goth.* His hair is of the true Sicambrian yellow; his eyes are of the lightest, and at the same time of the clearest blue; and the blood glows in his cheek with as firm a fervour as it did, according to the description of Jornandes, in those of the "Bello gaudentes prælio ridentes Teutones" of Attila. I

had never suspected before I saw him, that such extreme fairness and freshness of complexion could be compatible with so much variety and tenderness, but above all, with so much depth of expression. His forehead is finely, but strangely shaped; the regions of pure fancy, and of pure wit being both developed in a very striking manner—which is but seldom the case in any one individual—and the organ of observation having projected the *sinus frontalis* to a degree that is altogether uncommon. I have never seen a physiognomy which could pass with so much rapidity from the serious to the most ludicrous of effects. It is more eloquent, both in its gravity and in its levity, than almost any countenance I am acquainted with is in any one cast of expression; and yet I am not without my suspicions, that the versatility of its language may, in the end, take away from its power.

In a convivial meeting—more particularly after the first two hours are over—the beauty to which men are most alive in any piece of eloquence is that which depends on its being impregnated and instinct with feeling. Of this beauty, no eloquence can be more full than that of Mr. J—— W——n. His declamation is often loose and irregular to an extent that is not quite worthy of a man of his fine education and masculine powers; but all is redeemed, and more than redeemed, by his rich abundance of quick, generous, and expansive feelfeeling. The flashing brightness, and now and then the still more expressive dimness of his eye—and the tremulous music of a voice that is equally at home in the highest and the lowest of notes—and the attitude bent forward with an earnestness to which the graces could make no valuable addition—all together compose an index which they that run may read—a rod of communication to whose electricity no heart is barred. Inaccuracies of language are small matters when the ear is fed with the wild and mysterious cadences of the most natural of all melodies, and the mind filled to overflowing with the bright suggestions of an imagination, whose only fault lies in the uncontrollable profusion with which it scatters forth its fruits. With such gifts as these, and with the noblest of

themes to excite and adorn them, I have no doubt, that Mr. W——n, had he been in the church, would have left all the impassioned preachers I have ever heard, many thousand leagues behind him. Nor do I at all question, that even in some departments of his own profession of the law, had he in good earnest devoted his energies to its service, his success might have been equally brilliant. But his ambition had probably taken too decidedly another turn; nor, perhaps, would it be quite fair, either to him or to ourselves, to wish that the thing had been otherwise.

As Mr. W——n has not only a great admiration, but a great private friendship for Mr. H——, his eloquence displayed, it is probable, upon the present occasion, a large share of every feeling that might most happily inspire it. His theme was, indeed, the very best that the occasion could have thrown in his way; for what homage could be so appropriate, or so grateful to the manes of Burns, as that which sought to attain its object by welcoming and honouring the only worthy successor of his genius? I wish I could recall for your delight any portion of those glowing words in which this enthusiastic speaker strove to embody his own ideas—and indeed those of his audience—concerning the high and holy connection which exists between the dead and the living peasant—both "sprung from the very bosom of the people," both identifying themselves in all things with the spirit of their station, and endeavouring to ennoble themselves only by elevating it. It was thus, indeed, that a national assembly might most effectually do honour to a national poet. This was the true spirit for a commemoration of Robert Burns.

The effect which Mr. W——n's speech produced on H—— himself, was, to my mind, by far the most delightful thing that happened during the whole of the night. The Shepherd was one of the stewards, and in every point of view he must have expected some particular notice to be taken of his name; but either he had not been prepared for being spoken of at so early an hour, or was entirely thrown off his balance by the extraordinary flood of eloquence which Mr. W——n

poured out to do honour to his genius; for nothing could be more visibly unaffected than the air of utter blank amazement with which he rose to return his thanks. He rose, by the way, long before the time came. He had listened to Mr. W——n for some minutes, without comprehending the drift of his discourse; but when once he fairly discovered that he himself was the theme, he started to his feet, and with a face flushed all over deeper than scarlet, and eyes brimful of tears, devoured the words of the speaker,

> "Like hungry Jew in wilderness,
> Rejoicing o'er his manna."

His voice, when he essayed to address the company, seemed at first entirely to fail him; but he found means to make us hear a very few words, which told better than any speech could have done: "*I've aye been vera proud, gentlemen,*" (said he) "*to be a Scots poet—and I was never sae proud o't as I am just noo.* I believe there was no one there who did not sympathize heartily with this most honest pride. For my part, I began to be quite in love with the Ettrick Shepherd.

In process of time, the less jovial members of the company began to effect their retreat, and W—— and I, espying some vacant places at the table where Mr. W——n and the Ettrick Shepherd were seated, were induced to shift our situation, for the sake of being nearer these celebrated characters. I was placed within a few feet of H——, and introduced to W——n across the table, and soon found, from the way in which the bottle circulated in this quarter, that both of them inherited, in perfection, the old feud of Burns against the "*aquæ potores.*" As to the bottle, indeed, I should exclude H——; for he, long before I came into his neighbourhood, had finished the bottle of port allowed by our traiteur, and was deep in a huge jug of whiskey toddy—in the manufacture of which he is supposed to excel almost as much as Burns did—and in its consumption too, although happily in rather a more moderate degree.

After this time, I suspect the prescribed order of toasts be-

gan to be sadly neglected, for long speeches were uttered from remote corners, nobody knew by whom or about what; song after song was volunteer'd; and, all the cold restraints of sobriety being gradually thawed by the sun of festive cheer,

"Wit walked the rounds, and music filled the air."

The inimitable "Jolly Beggars" of the poet, which has lately been set to muic, was got up in high style, the songs being exquisitely sung by Messrs. Swift, Templeton, and Lees, and the recitative read with much effect by Mr. B——. But even this entertainment, with all its inherent variety, was too regular for the taste of the assembly. The chairman himself broke in upon it the first, by proposing a very appropriate toast, which I shall attempt to naturalize in Cardiganshire; this again called up a very old gentleman, who conceived that some compliment had been intended for a club of which he is president; in short, compliments and toasts became so interlaced and interlarded, that nobody could think of taking up the thread of "The Jolly Beggars" again. By the way, this inimitable Cantata is not to be found in Currie's edition, and I suspect you are a stranger even to its name; and yet, had Burns left nothing more than this behind him, I think he would still have left enough to justify all the honour in which his genius is held. There does not exist, in any one piece throughout the whole range of English poetry, such a collection of true, fresh, and characteristic lyrics. Here we have nothing, indeed, that is very high, but we have much that is very tender. What can be better in its way, than the fine song of the Highland Widow, "wha had in money a well been douked?"

"A Highland lad my love was born,
The Lowland laws he held in scorn;
But he still was faithful to his clan,
My gallant braw John Highlandman.
With his philabeg and tartan plaid,
And good claymore down by his side,

The ladies' hearts he did trepan,
My gallant braw John Highlandman.
Sing, hey, my braw John Highlandman,
Sing, ho, my braw John Highlandman,
There's not a lad in a' the lan'
Was match for my John Highlandman."

And that fine Penseroso close,

"But oh! they catch'd him at the last,
And bound him in a dungeon fast;
My curse upon them every one,
They've hang'd my braw John Highlandman.
And now, a widow, I must mourn
Departed joys that ne'er return;
No comfort—but a hearty can,
When I think on John Highlandman."

The Little Fiddler, who (in vain, alas!) offers his services to console her, is conceived in the most happy taste.

"A pigmy scraper wi' his fiddle,
Wha used at trysts and fairs to driddle,
Her strapping limb and gausy middle,
(He reached nae higher,)
Had holed his heartie like a riddle,
And blawn't on fire.
Wi' hand on haunch, and upward ee,
He crooned his gamut, one, two, three,
Then in an Arioso key,
The wee Apollo
Set off with allegretto glee,
His giga solo."

But the finest part of the whole, is the old Scottish Soldier's ditty. Indeed, I think there is no question, that half of the best ballads Campbell has written are the legitimate progeny of some of these lines.

I

"I am a son of Mars, who have been in many wars,
And shew my cuts and scars wherever I come;
This here was for a wench, and that other in a trench,
When welcoming the French at the sound of the drum.

My prenticeship I passed where my leader breathed his last,
When the bloody die was cast on the heights of Abram;
I served out my trade when the gallant game was play'd,
And the Moro low was laid at the sound of the drum.

2

"I lastly was with Curtis among the floating batt'ries,
And there I left for witness an arm and a limb;
Yet let my country need me, with Elliot to head me,
I'd clatter on my stumps at the sound of the drum.
What though with hoary locks, I must stand the winter shocks,
Beneath the woods and rocks oftentimes for a home!
When the t'other bag I sell, and the t'other bottle tell,
I could meet a troop of hell at the sound of the drum."

What different ideas of low life one forms even from reading the works of men who paint it admirably. Had Crabbe, for instance, undertaken to represent the carousal of a troop of beggars in a hedge alehouse, how unlike would his production have been to this Cantata? He would have painted their rags and their dirt with the accuracy of a person who is not used to see rags and dirt very often; he would have seized the light careless swing of their easy code of morality, with the penetration of one who has long been a Master-Anatomist of the manners and the hearts of men. But I doubt very much, whether any one could enter into the true spirit of such a meeting, who had not been, at some period of his life, a partaker in *propriâ personâ*, and almost *par cum paribus*, in the rude merriment of its constituents. I have no doubt that Burns sat for his own picture in the Bard of the Cantata, and had often enough in some such scene as *Poosie Nansie's*—

——— "Rising, rejoicing
Between his twa Deborahs,
Looked round him, and found them
Impatient for his chorus."

It is by such familiarity alone that the secret and essence of that charm, which no group of human companions entirely wants, can be fixed and preserved even by the greatest

of poets—Mr. Crabbe would have described the Beggars like a firm, though humane, Justice of the Peace—poor Robert Burns did not think himself entitled to assume any such airs of superiority. The consequence is, that we would have understood and pitied the one group, but that we sympathize even with the joys of the other. We would have thrown a few shillings to Mr. Crabbe's Mendicants, but we are more than half inclined to sit down and drink them ourselves along with the "orra duds" of those of Burns.

I myself—will you believe it?—was one of those who insisted upon disturbing the performance of this glorious Cantata with my own dissonant voice. In plain truth, I was so happy, that I could not keep silence, and such was the buoyancy of my enthusiasm, that nothing could please me but singing a Scottish song. I believe, after all, I got through with it pretty well; at least, I did well enough to delight my neighbours. My song was that old favourite of your's—

"My name it is Donald Macdonald,
I live in the Hielands sae grand."

One of the best songs, I must think, that our times has produced; and, indeed, it was for many years one of the most popular. I had no idea who wrote the words of my song, and had selected it merely for its own merit, and my own convenience; but I had no sooner finished, than Mr. H—— stretched his hand to me, across two or three that sat between us, and cried out with an air of infinite delight, "Od', sir—'Doctor Morris'—(for he had heard my name)—"od', sir—I wrote that sang when I was a herd on Yarrow—and little did I think ever to live to hear an English gentleman sing it." From this moment there was no bound to the warmth of our affection for each other; in order to convince you of which, in so far as I myself was concerned, I fairly deserted my claret for the sake of joining in the jug-party of the Shepherd. Nor, after all, was this quite so mighty a sacrifice as you may be inclined to imagine. I assure you, there are worse things in life than whisky toddy; although I cannot go the same

length with Mr. H——, who declared over and over that there is nothing so good.

A man may, now and then, adopt a change of liquor with advantage; but, upon the whole, I like better to see people "stick to their vocation." I think nothing can be a more pitiable sight than a French count on his travels, striving to look pleased over a bumper of strong port; and an Oxford doctor of divinity looks almost as much like a fish out of water, when he is constrained to put up with the best claret in the world. In like manner, it would have tended very much to have disturbed my notions of propriety, had I found the Ettrick Shepherd drinking Champaigne or Hock, It would have been a sin against *keeping* with such a face as he has. Although for some time past he has spent a considerable portion of every year in excellent, even in refined society, the external appearance of the man can have undergone but very little change since he was "a herd on Yarrow." His face and hands are still as brown as if he lived entirely *sub dio*. His very hair has a coarse stringiness about it, which proves beyond dispute its utter ignorance of all the arts of the friseur; and hangs in playful whips and cords about his ears, in a style of the most perfect innocence imaginable. His mouth, which, when he smiles, nearly cuts the the totality of his face in twain, is an object that would make the Chevalier Ruspini die with indignation; for his teeth have been allowed to grow where they listed, and as they listed, presenting more resemblance, in arrangement (and colour too,) to a body of crouching sharp-shooters, than to any more regular species of array. The effect of a forehead, towering with a true poetic grandeur above such features as these, and of an eye that illuminates their surface with the genuine lightnings of genius,—

> ——"an eye that, under brows
> Shaggy and deep, has meanings which are brought
> From years of youth,——"

these are things which I cannot so easily transfer to my

paper. Upon the whole, his exterior reminded me very much of some of Wordsworth's descriptions of his pedlar :—

> ——— "plain his garb,
> Such as might suit a rustic sire, prepared
> For Sabbath duties ; yet he is a man
> Whom no one could have passed without remark.
> Active and nervous is his gait. His limbs
> And his whole figure breathe intelligence."

Indeed, I can scarcely help suspecting, that that great poet, who has himself thought so much

> "On Man, on Nature, and on Human Life,
> Musing in solitude"——

must have thought more than once of the intellectual history of the Ettrick Shepherd when he drew that noble sketch, which no man can ridicule, unless from a vicious want of faith in the greatness of human nature. Neither is there any thing unlikely in the supposition in another point of view, for W—— tells me the two poets have often met, and always expressed the highest admiration for each other. He says,

> "From his sixth year, the boy of whom I speak,
> In summer tended cattle on the hills.'

I believe poor H—— tended them in winter also.

> ——— "From that bleak tenement,
> He many an evening to his distant home
> In solitude returning, saw the hills
> Grow larger in the darkness, all alone
> Beheld the stars come out above his head,
> And travelled through the wood, with no one near
> To whom he might confess the things he saw.
> *So the foundations of his mind were laid.*
> In such communion not from terror free,
> While yet a child and long before his time,
> He had perceived the presence and the power
> Of greatness ; and deep feeling had impressed
> Great objects on his mind, with portraiture
> And colour so distinct, that on his mind
> They lay like substances, and almost seemed
> To haunt the bodily sense."

Those who have read the Shepherd's latest writings, as I fear you have not done, would find still stronger confirmation of my idea in what follows :—

> ——" Thus informed,
> He had small need of books ; for many a tale,
> Traditionary round the mountains hung,
> And many a legend, peopling the dark woods,
> Nourished imagination in her youth.
> * * *
> The life and death of Martyrs, who sustained,
> With will inflexible, those fearful pangs,
> Triumphantly displayed in records left,
> Of persecution and the Covenant—Times
> Whose echo rings through Scotland to this hour."

But I must not think of discussing the Ettrick Shepherd in a single letter. As for the Burns's dinner, I really cannot in honesty pretend to give you any very exact history of the latter part of its occurrences. As the night kept advancing, the company kept diminishing, till about one o'clock in the morning, when we found ourselves reduced to a small staunch party of some five-and-twenty, men not to be shaken from their allegiance to King Bacchus, by any changes in his administration—in other words, men who by no means considered it as necessary to leave the room, because one, or even because two presidents had set them such an example. The last of these presidents, Mr. P. R——, a young counsellor of very rising reputation and most pleasant manners, made his approach to the chair amidst such a thunder of acclamation as seems to be issuing from the cheeks of the Bacchantes, when Silenus gets astride on his ass, in the famous picture of Rubens. Once in the chair, there was no fear of his quitting it while any remained to pay homage due to his authority. He made speeches, one chief merit of which consisted (unlike Epic poems) in their having neither beginning, middle, nor end—He sung songs in which music was not—He proposed toasts in which meaning was not—But over every thing that he said there was flung such a radiance of

sheer mother-wit, that there was no difficulty in seeing the want of *meaning* was no involuntary want. By the perpetual dazzle of his wit, by the cordial flow of his good humour, but above all, by the cheering influence of his broad happy face, seen through its halo of punch-steam, (for even the chair had by this time got enough of the juice of the grape,) he contrived to diffuse over us all, for a long time, one genial atmosphere of unmingled mirth. How we got out of that atmosphere I cannot say I remember; but am, notwithstanding,

Ever your's,

P. M.

LETTER XIII.

TO THE SAME.

Dear David,

When you reproach me with being so long at the seat of a celebrated University, and yet preserving the most profound silence concerning tutors, professors, examinations, degrees, and all the other mighty items of academical life, you do no more than I might have expected from one, who has derived his only ideas of a university from Oxford and Cambridge. In these places, the university is every thing; the houses of the town seem merely to be the appendages of the colleges, and the townsmen themselves only a better sort of menials to the gownsmen. If you hear a bell ring there, you may be sure it is meant to call together those whose duty it is to attend in some chapel, hall, or lecture-room; if you see a man pull off his hat in the street, you may be sure it is in honour of some tuft, sleeve, or scarf, well accustomed to such obeisances. Here the case is very different. The academical buildings, instead of forming the bulk and centre of every prospect—instead of shooting up towers and domes and battlements in every direction, far above, not only the com-

mon dwellings of the citizens, but the more ancient and more lofty groves of oak and elm, in which, for centuries, they have been embosomed—instead of all this proud and sweeping extent of venerable magnificence, the academical buildings of Edinburgh are piled together in one rather obscure corner of a splendid city, which would scarcely be less splendid than it is, although they were removed altogether from its precincts. In the society among which I have lived since my arrival here, (and I assure you its circle has been by no means a very confined one,) I am convinced there are few subjects about which so little is said or thought, as the University of Edinburgh. I rather think, that a well-educated stranger, who had no previous knowledge that a university had its seat in this place, (if we can suppose the existence of such a person,) might sojourn in Edinburgh for many weeks, without making the discovery for himself. And yet, from all I can hear, the number of resident members of this university is seldom below two thousand, and among those by whom their education is conducted, there are unquestionably some, whose names, in whatever European university they might be placed, could not fail to be regarded as among the most illustrious of its ornaments.

The first and most obvious cause of the smallness of attention attracted to the University of Edinburgh, is evidently the want of any academical dress. There are no *gownsmen* here, and this circumstance is one which, with our Oxford ideas, would alone be almost sufficient to prove the non-existence of a university. This, however, is a small matter after all, and rather an effect than a cause. The members of the university do not reside, as ours do, within the walls of colleges; they go once or twice every day, as it may happen, to hear a discourse pronounced by one of their professors; but beyond this, they have little connection of any kind with the *locale* of the academical buildings; and it follows very naturally, that they feel themselves to have comparatively a very slight connection with academical life. They live in their fathers' houses, (for a great proportion of them belong to the city

itself,) or they inhabit lodgings in whatever part of the city they please; and they dine alone or together, just as it suits them; they are never compelled to think of each other beyond the brief space of the day in which they are seated in the same lecture-room; in short, the whole course and tenor of their existence is unacademical, and by persons thinking and living in a way so independent of each other, and so dispersed among the crowds of a city such as Edinburgh, any such badges of perpetual distinction as our cap and gown, could scarcely fail to be regarded as very absurd and disagreeable incumbrances. The want of these, however, has its disadvantages as well as its advantages, even in regard to their own individual comfort.

So far as I comprehend the first part of the general system of University education in this place, it is as follows. The students enter at fourteen, fifteen, or even much earlier—exactly as used to be the case in our own universities two centuries ago; for I remember it is mentioned in Lord Herbert of Cherbury's Memoirs, (and that, too, as a matter by no means out of the common course,) that he was not twelve years old when he came to reside at Oxford. When they enter, they are far less skilled in Latin than boys of the same age at any of our great schools; and with the exception of those educated at one particular school in Edinburgh, they have no Greek. Their acquisition of these languages is not likely to be very rapid under the professors of Greek and Latin, to whose care the University entrusts them; for each of these gentlemen has to do with a class of at least two hundred pupils; and in such a class, it would be impossible to adopt, with the least effect, any other method of teaching than that by formal prælections. Now, of all ways, this is the least adapted for siezing and commanding the attention of a set of giddy urchins, who, although addressed by the name of "Gentlemen," are, in fact, as full of the spirit of boyish romping, as at any previous period of their lives. A slight attempt is sometimes made to keep alive their attention, by examining them the one day concerning what they had heard on

the other; and this plan, I understand, begins to be carried into execution, in a more regular way than heretofore. But it is not possible to examine so great a number of boys, either very largely or very closely; and I should be very apprehensive, that their many temptations to idleness must in general overcome, with little difficulty, this one slender stimulus to exertion.

As for the professors of these languages, the nature of the duties which they perform, of course reduces them to something quite different from what we should understand by the name they bear. They are not employed in assisting young men to study with greater facility or advantage, the poets, the historians, or the philosophers of antiquity; nay, it can scarcely be said, in any proper meaning of the term, that they are employed in teaching the principles of language.—They are schoolmasters in the strictest sense of the word—for their time is spent in laying the very lowest part of the foundation, on which a superstructure of erudition must be reared. A profound and accomplished scholar may, at times, be found discharging these duties; but most assuredly there is no need either of depth or of elegance, to enable him to discharge them as well as the occasion requires. The truth is, however, that very few men give themselves the trouble to become fine scholars, without being pushed on by many kinds of stimulus, and I know of no very powerful stimulus within the action of which these gentlemen are placed. They have not the ambition and delight of making their pupils fine scholars,—feelings, which, in England, are productive of so many admirable results—because the system of the University is such, that their pupils are hurried out of their hands long before they could hope to inspire them with any thing like a permanent love for studies attended with so many difficulties. Nay, they have not the ambition and delight of elevating themselves to a high and honourable rank in public estimation, by their own proficiency in classical lore; for this is the only country in civilized Europe (whatever may be the cause of the phenomenon) wherein attain-

ments of that kind are regarded with a very slender degree of admiration. How this may have happened, I know not; but the fact is certain, that for these two hundred years, Scotland has produced no man of high reputation, whose fame rested, or rests, upon what we call classical learning; nor, at the present day, does she possess any one who might be entitled to form an exception to this rule of barrenness.

Before these boys, therefore, have learned Latin enough to be able to read any Latin author with facility, and before they have learned Greek enough to enable them to understand thoroughly any one line in any one Greek book in existence, they are handed over to the professor of Logic, Rhetoric, and Belles-lettres, *quasi jam linguarum satis periti.* You and I know well enough it is no trifling matter to acquire any thing like a mastery, a true and effectual command, over the great languages of antiquity; we well remember how many years of busy exertion it cost us in boyhood—yes, and in manhood too—before we found ourselves in a condition to make any complete use of the treasures of wit and wisdom to which these glorious languages are the keys. When we then are told that the whole of the classical part of Scottish academical education is completed within the space of two years, and this with boys of the age I have mentioned, there is no occasion for saying one word more about the matter. We see and know, as well as if we had examined every lad in Edinburgh, that not one of them who has enjoyed no better means of instruction than these, can possibly know any thing more than the merest and narrowest rudiments of classical learning. This one simple fact is a sufficient explanation, not only of the small advances made by the individuals of this nation in the paths of erudition, strictly so called—but of much that is peculiar, and, if one may be permitted to say so, of much that is highly disagreeable too, in the general tone of the literature wherein the national mind is and has been expressed. It shows, at once, the origin of much that distinguishes the authors of Scotland, not from those of England alone, but from those of all the other nations of Europe.

I do not mean that which honourably distinguishes them, (for of such distinction also they have much,) but that which distinguishes them in a distressing and degrading manner—their ignorance of the great models of antiquity—nay, the irreverent spirit in which they have the audacity to speak concerning men and works, whom (considered as a class) modern times have as yet in vain attempted to equal.

This is a subject of which it would require a bolder man than I am to say so much, to almost any Scotchman whose education has been entirely conducted in his own country. If you venture only to tread upon the hem of that garment of self-sufficiency, in which the true Scotchman wraps himself, he is sure to turn round upon you as if you had aimed a dagger at his vitals; and as to this particular point of attack, he thinks he has most completely punished you for your presumption, (in the first place,) and checked your courage for the future, (in the second,) when he has launched out against you one or two of those sarcasms about "longs and shorts," and "the superiority of things to words," with which we have, till of late, been familiar in the pages of the Edinburgh Review. A single arrow from that redoubtable quiver, is hurled against you, and the archer turns away with a smile, nothing doubting that your business is done—nor, indeed, is it necessary to prolong the contest; for although you may not feel yourself to be entirely conquered, you must, at least, have seen enough to convince you, that you have no chance of making your adversary yield. If he have not justice on his side, he is, at least, tenacious of his purpose, and it would be a waste of trouble to attempt shaking his opinions either of you or of himself.

The rest of the world, however, may be excused, if, *absente reo*, they venture to think and to speak a little more pertinaciously concerning the absurdity of this neglect of classical learning, which the Scotch do not deny or palliate, but acknowledge and defend. We may be excused, if we hesitate a little to admit the weight of reasons from which the universal intellect of Christendom has always dissented, and at this

moment dissents as firmly as ever, and to doubt whether the results of the system adopted in Scotland have been so very splendid as to authorize the tone of satisfied assurance, in which Scotchmen conceive themselves entitled to deride those who adhere to the older and more general style of discipline.

It would be very useless to address to one, who has not given to the writers of antiquity some portion of such study as they deserve, any description of the chaste and delightful feelings with which the labours of such study are rewarded—far more to demand his assent to conclusions derived from descriptions which he would not fail to treat as so purely fantastical. The *incredulus odi* sort of disdain, with which several intelligent and well-educated men in this place have treated me, when I ventured in their presence to say a few words concerning that absurd kind of self-denial, abstinence, and *mortificatio spiritus*, which seems to be practised by the gentlemen of Scotland, in regard to this most rational and most enduring species of pleasures—the air of mingled scorn and pity, with which they listened to me, and the condescending kind of mock assent which they expressed in reply, have sufficiently convinced me that the countrymen of David Hume are not over-fond of taking any thing upon trust. The language of their looks being interpreted, is, "Yes—yes—it is all very well to speak about feelings, and so forth; but is it not sad folly to waste so many years upon mere words?"—— Of all the illogical, irrational sorts of delusion, with which ignorance ever came to the consolation of self-love, surely this is the most palpably absurd—The darkness of it may be *felt*.—During the few short and hasty months in which the young gentlemen of Scotland go through the ceremonious quackery which they are pleased to call *learning Greek*, it is very true that they are occupied with *mere words*, and that, too, in the meanest sense of the phrase. They are seldom very sure whether any one word be a noun or a verb, and therefore they are *occupied* about words. The few books, or fragments of books, which they read, are comprehended with a vast expense of labour, if they be comprehended at all—

with continual recurrence to some wretched translation, English or Latin, or still more laborious recurrence to the unmanageable bulk and unreadable types of a Lexicon. It is no wonder that they tell you all their time was spent upon *mere words*, and it would be a mighty wonder if the time so spent were recollected by them with any considerable feeling of kindliness. I must own, I am somewhat of my Lord Byron's opinion concerning the absurdity of allowing boys to learn the ancient languages, from books the charm of which consists in any very delicate and evanescent beauties—any *curiosa felicitas* either of ideas or expressions. I also remember the time when I complained to myself (to others I durst not) that I was occupied with mere words—and to this hour, I feel, as the noble Childe does, the miserable effects of that most painful kind of exercise, which with us is soon happily changed for something of a very different nature—but which here in Scotland gives birth to almost the only idea connected with the phrase *studying Greek*.

But that a people so fond of the exercise of reason as the Scotch, should really think and speak as if it were possible for those who spend many years in the study of the classics, to be all the while occupied about mere words, this, I confess, is a thing that strikes me as being what Mr. Coleridge would call, "One of the voonders above voonders."—How can the thing be done? It is not in the power of the greatest index-making or bibliographical genius in the world to do so, were he to make the endeavour with all the zeal of his vocation. It is not possible, in the first place, to acquire any knowledge of the mere words—the vocables—of any ancient language, without reading very largely in the books which remain to us out of the ruins of its literature. Rich above all example as the literature of Greece once was, and rich as the pure literature of Greece is even at this moment, when compared with that of the Romans, it so happens that all the classical Greek works in the world occupy but a trifling space in any man's library; and were it possible to read philosophers and historians as quickly as novellists or tourists, they might all

be read through in no very alarming space of time by any circulating-library glutton who might please to attack them. Without reading, and being familiar with the whole of these books, or at least without doing something little short of this, it is absolutely impossible for any man to acquire even a good verbal knowledge of Greek. Now, that any man should make himself familiar with these books, without at the same time forming some pretty tolerable acquaintance with the subjects of which they treat—not even a Scotsman, I think, will venture to assert. And that any man can make himself acquainted with these books (in this sense of the phrase) without having learned something that is worthy of being known—over and above the words submitted to his eyes in their pages—I am quite sure, no person of tolerable education in Christendom will assert, unless he be a Scotchman.

To follow the history of great and remarkable nations, as narrated by the clear and graphic genius of their own writers—and so to become acquainted with human nature as displaying itself under the guise of manners very different from our own—learning, thereby, of necessity, to understand both our own manners, and our own nature, better than we could otherwise have done—this is one of the first exercises in which the mind of the classical student must be engaged, and this alone, were this all, might be more than enough to redeem him from the reproach of being a mere hunter of words. There are only three great objects which can ever draw to them in a powerful manner the spirits of enlightened men, and occupy with inexhaustible resources the leisure that is left to them by the State of which they are members, and the Society with which their days are linked—the Philosophy of life, the enjoyment arising from the Fine Arts, and the study of History. All the three are well fitted to exalt and enrich, in many ways, the internal and external parts of our nature. But neither of the two first-mentioned can be compared in this respect with the study of history, the only study which presents to all our endeavours and aspirations after higher intellectual cultivation, a fast middle-point, and grappling-place—the ef-

fects, namely, the outward and visible effects, which the various modifications of society and education have already produced upon man, his destinies, and his powers. Without the knowledge of this great and mighty *past*, the philosophy of life, with whatever wit she may enchant, with whatever eloquence she may charm us, can never effectually lift our view from the ground on which our feet tread—*the present*—from the narrow and limited circle of our own customs, and those of our immediate neighbours and contemporaries. Even the higher philosophy, the boldest, and in a certain measure, therefore, the most remarkable of all the exertions of human intellect, would in vain, without the aid of history, attempt to explain to us the formation and development of our own faculties and feelings; because without it, she could not fail to present us with more of dark and inexplicable enigmas, than of clear and intelligible results. History, on the other hand, when she is not confined to the mere chronicling of names, years, and external events, but seizes and expands before us the spirit of great men, great times, and great actions, is in herself alone a true and entire philosophy, intelligible in all things, and sure in all things; and above all other kinds of philosophy, rich both in the materials and the means of application. The value of the fine arts, in regard to the higher species of mental cultivation, is admitted by all whose opinion is of any avail. But even these, without that earnestness of intention, and gravity of power, which they derive from their connection with the actual experience of man, his destiny, and his history—would be in danger of degenerating into an empty sport, a mere plaything of the imagination. The true sense and purpose of the highest and most admirable productions of the imitative arts, (and of poetry among the rest,) are then only clearly and powerfully revealed to us, when we are able to transport ourselves into the air and spirit of the times in which they were produced, or whose image it is their object to represent.

If Philosophy (strictly so called) grapples chiefly with our reason, and the Fine Arts with our feelings and imagination,

History, on the other hand, claims a more universal possession of us, and considers the whole man, and all the powers of his soul, as alike within her control. So, at least, she should do, when she does what is worthy of her high destination—and thus it is that History occupies, in and by herself, in that glorious circle which embraces all the higher cultivation of man, if not the most splendid place, at least the most necessary. Without her, we should want the link and bond of connection which fastens the whole mighty structure together. One great, and, above all others, most interesting field, is opened for the study of history, by the extraordinary and unforeseen events which characterize *the present*. The remembrance of the great *past*—the knowledge of its occurrences and its spirit, is the only thing which can furnish us with a fair and quiet point of view from which to survey the *present*—a standard by which to form just conclusions respecting the comparative greatness or littleness of that which passes before our eyes. Here, then, there is another instance of a coincidence which may often enough be observed in human affairs. The simplest of things is also the highest. History forms the apparently light and easy commencement of the education of the boy; and yet the more the mind of the man is informed and accomplished, the more manifold occasion will be found to make use of the stores of history—the more will he find himself called upon to exert all his power, in order to penetrate and comprehend the deep sense of history. For, as there is no man of reflection so acute, that he can suppose himself to have thoroughly understood the scope of history, and no man of research so diligent, that he can suppose himself to have obtained possession of all the materials of history, so neither is there any man so low or so high, that he can suppose himself to be placed in a situation, wherein his own examination of that which is recorded may not be of essential benefit to himself, in regard to that which is and is to come.

Now, where and how is History to be studied? I answer, first and best in the great historians of antiquity. The men

whom these present to our view, have embodied, in their lives and persons, almost all that we can think of as forming the true greatness and true honour of our nature. The events which they describe, however small the apparent sphere of their influence may sometimes be, were those which decided the fate of nations which for ages ruled and disciplined the world, and the influence of whose rule and discipline is still preserved, and likely to be preserved, even in parts of the earth to which their actual and corporeal sway never found access. The thoughts, and feelings, and actions of these men and these nations, must for ever be regarded, by all who can understand them, as the best *examples* or *patterns* of us, our nature, our powers, and our destinies. We are the intellectual progeny of these men. Even their blood flows in our veins—at least some tincture—but without them what had our Spirits been? That question cannot be answered—but, at least, they had not been what they are. In every thing which we see, hear, and do, some knowledge of them and their nature is taken for granted—that is a postulate in all communication between men who can read and write in Christendom. For what reason, therefore, should we be satisfied with a superficial knowledge of that, whereof knowledge is practically admitted to be not only an ornament, but a necessary? For what reason should we neglect to store our minds, when they are most open for impressions, with full, clear, and indelible memorials of the mighty *past*?

It is possible, it is often said, to know all that is to be known about the ancients, without being acquainted with their languages. The assertion is a contradiction in terms. The most true, the most lasting, the most noble creation by which an independent nation seeks to manifest her spirit and her independence, is her formation and cultivation of an independent speech. And it is impossible to know such a nation as she deserves to be known, without knowing also, and that thoroughly, this is the first and best of her productions. Her language is her history. What, after all, are battles, and sieges, and kings, and consuls, and conquerors, to the pro-

cesses of thought, and the developments of feeling? Wherein does the essence of a nation exist, if it be not in the character of her mind? and how is that mind to be penetrated or understood, if we neglect the pure and faithful mirror in which of old it has stamped its likeness—her language? Men may talk as they choose about translations; there is, in brevity and in truth, no such thing as a translation. The bold outline is, indeed, preserved, but the gentle, delicate, minute shadings vanish. And if our study be MAN, is it not clear enough that the more delicate and minute these may be, the more likely are they to reveal the true springs of his working?

The advantages to be derived from a more patient and accurate course of classical study than prevails in Scotland, might be explained in a way that, to every rational person, could not have less than the power of demonstration. Of the poetry, and, above all, of the philosophy of antiquity, it would be easy to speak even at more length than of her history. But the truth is, that the whole of these things hang together in indissoluble union, and no man could, if he would, understand any one of them well, without understanding a very great deal of the others also. In Scotland, they understand, they care about none of the three. I have conversed with a very great number of her literary men—and surely it is not necessary to say any thing in praise of their manifold general attainments—but I honestly tell you, that I have not yet conversed with any one, who seemed to me ever to have gone through any thing like a complete course, either of Greek poetry, or Greek history. As for Greek philosophy, beyond Xenophon's Memorabilia, the Phaedon, and Aristotle's Poetick, I have never heard any allusion made to the existence of any books connected with that subject; and I am convinced, that a man who had read through Plato or Aristotle, or even who was entitled to say that he had any tolerable acquaintance with the works of either of these great authors, would be scarcely more of a wonder at Otaheite than in Edinburgh. But this indeed it is extremely unnecessary to explain

to you, who have read and admired so much of the works of Dugald Stewart; for nothing can be more clear to the eyes of the initiated, than that this great and enlightened man has been throughout contented to derive his ideas of the Greek philosophy from very secondary sources. When he dies, there will not, most assuredly, be found among his books, as there was among those of David Hume, an interleaved copy of Duvall's Aristotle. And if such be *his* ignorance, (which, I doubt not, he himself would be candid enough to acknowledge without hesitation,) what may we not suppose to be the Cimmerian obscurity which hangs over his worshippers and disciples?—Without the genius, which often suggests to him much of what kindred genius had suggested to the philosophers of antiquity, and which still more often enables him to pass, by different steps, to the same point at which these had arrived—the pupils of this illustrious man are destitute of the only qualities which could have procured any pardon for the errors of their master. The darkness is with them "total eclipse."

I have wandered, you will say, even more widely than is my custom. But you must keep in recollection the terms on which I agreed to write to you during this my great northern tour. As for the subject from which I have wandered, viz. the Greek and Latin Muses of the University of Edinburgh, I assure you I feel very easy under the idea of having treated these ladies with slender courtesy. Their reputation is extremely low, and I verily believe they deserve no better. They are of the very worst and most contemptible of all kinds of coquettes; for they give a little to every body, and much to no one.

The Professors of the two languages here are both, however, very respectable men in their way; that is, they would both of them do admirable things, if they had any call upon their ambition. Mr. C——, the Professor of Latin, or, as their style is, of *humanity*, is a very great reader of all kinds of books, and, what is rather singular in one fond of excursive reading, is a very diligent and delighted student of

the higher mathematics. I went to hear his prælection the other day, and after the boys were sent away, began to ask him a few questions about the system adopted in their tuition, but in vain. He insisted upon talking of fluxions, and fluxions only; and, as I know nothing of fluxions, I was glad to break up the conference. With him, if a pun may be allowed,

"——— *labitur* et *labetur*, in omne volubilis ævum."

Mr. D——, the Professor of Greek, has published several little things in the Cambridge Classical Researches, and is certainly very much above the common run of scholars. I observe, by the way, that in one of his Latin title-pages, he subjoins to his name a set of English initials.

* * * * *

* * * * *

P. M.

LETTER XV.

TO THE SAME.

After Mr. C—— and Mr. D—— are supposed to have given their pupils as much Latin and Greek as people of sense ought to be troubled with, they are transferred to the Professor of Logic, and recorded in the books of the University, as students of philosophy. The style used by their new professor would, however, convey to a stranger a very erroneous notion of the duties in reality allotted to him. Logic, according to our acceptation of the word, is one of the least and last of the things which he is supposed to teach. His true business is to inform the minds of his pupils with some first faint ideas of the Scotch systems of metaphysics and

morals—to explain to them the rudiments of the great vocabulary of Reid and Stewart, and fit them, in some measure, for plunging next year into the midst of all the light and all the darkness scattered over the favourite science of this country, by the Professor of Moral Philosophy, Dr. T—— B——.

I could not find leisure for attending the prælections of all the Edinburgh professors; but I was resolved to hear, at least, one discourse of the last mentioned celebrated person. So I went one morning in good time, and took my place in a convenient corner of that class-room, to which the rising metaphysicians of the north resort with so much eagerness. Before the professor arrived, I amused myself with surveying the well-covered rows of benches with which the area of the large room was occupied. I thought I could distinguish the various descriptions of speculative young men come thither from the different quarters of Scotland, fresh from the first zealous study of Hume, Berkeley, and Locke, and quite sceptical whether the timber upon which they sat had any real existence, or whether there was such a thing as heat in the grate which was blazing before them. On one side might be seen, perhaps, a Pyrrhonist from Inverness-shire, deeply marked with the small-pox, and ruminating upon our not seeing double with two eyes. The gaunt and sinewy frame of this meditative mountaineer—his hard legs set wide asunder, as if to take full advantage of their more usual integument, the philabeg—his features, bearing so many marks of the imperfect civilization and nomadic existence of his progenitors—all together could not fail to strike me as rather out of place in such a situation as this. On the other side might be remarked one, who seemed to be an embryo clergyman, waiting anxiously for some new lights, which he expected the coming lecture would throw upon the great system of Cause and Effect, and feeling rather qualmish after having read that morning Hume's Sceptical Solution of Sceptical Doubts. Nearer the professor's table was probably a crack member of some crack debating-club, with a grin of incorrigible self-complacency

shining through his assumed frown of profound reflection—looking, as the French say, as grave as a pot-de-chambre—and longing, above all things, for seven o'clock in the evening, when he hoped himself to assume a conspicuous position behind a green table, with a couple of candles upon it, and fully refute the objections of his honourable and eloquent friend who spoke last. A little farther to the right might be observed a fine, healthy, well-thriven lad from Haddingtonshire, but without the slightest trace of metaphysics in his countenance—one who would have thought himself much better employed in shooting crows on Leith sands, and in whom the distinction between Sensation and Volition excited nothing but chagrin and disgust.

Throughout the whole of this motley assemblage, there was a prodigious mending of pens, and folding of paper; every one, as it appeared, having arrived with the determination to carry away the *Dicta Magistri*, not in his head only, but in his note-book. Some, after having completed their preparations for the business of this day, seemed to be conning over the monuments of their yesterday's exertion, and getting as firm a grapple as possible of the last links of the chain, whereof a new series was about to be expanded before them. There was a very care-worn kind of hollowness in many of their eyes, as if they had been rather over-worked in the business of staring upon stenography; and not a few of their noses were pinched and sharpened, as it were, with the habitual throes and agonies of extreme hesitation. As the hour began to strike, there arose a simultaneous clamour of coughing and spitting, and blowing of noses, as if all were prepared for listening long to the lecturer, without disturbing him or their neighbours; and such was the infectiousness of their zeal, that I caught myself fidgetting on my seat, and clearing out for action like the rest. At last, in came the professor, with a pleasant smile upon his face, arrayed in a black Geneva cloak, over a snuff-coloured coat and buff waistcoat. He mounted to his elbow-chair, and laid his papers on the desk before him, and in a moment all was still as

the Tomb of the Capulets—every eye filled with earnestness, and every pen filled with ink.

Doctor B—— has a physiognomy very expressive of mildness and quiet contemplativeness; but when he got fairly into the middle of his subject, his features kindled amazingly, and he went through some very subtle and abstruse disquisitions, with great keenness and animation. I have seen few persons who pursued the intellectual chase with so much ardour; but, as I observed before, it did not appear as if all his pupils were sufficiently well mounted or equipped to be able to keep up with him. His elocution is distinct and elegant, and in those parts of his subject which admitted of being tastefully handled, there was a flow of beautiful language, as finely delivered as it was finely conceived. It is very much his practice to introduce quotations from the poets, which not only afford the best illustrations of his own speculations, but are, at the same time, valuable, as furnishing a pleasing relaxation to the mind of the hearer in the midst of the toils of abstract thought. The variety of delightful images which he thus brings before the view, refreshes the mental eye, and enables it to preserve its power of examination much longer than it could do, were it condemned to experience no relief from the dry mazes of abstract disquisition. Dr. B——, in this respect, imitates with great wisdom and success, the example of Harris, whose intimate knowledge of Shakspeare has done more good to his books, and afforded more delight to his readers, than perhaps any one of all his manifold accomplishments. Nay, I might have quoted the still higher example of the Stagyrite himself, who produces an effect equally delightful by his perpetual citations from Homer, or, as he calls him, Ὁ Ποιητης.

The immediate predecessor of Dr. B——, in this important chair, was no less a person than Dugald Stewart; and it was easy to observe, in the midst of many lesser deviations, that the general system of this great man's philosophy is adhered to by his successor, and that he is, in truth, one of his intellectual children. I have seen Mr. S—— once since I

came to Edinburgh, but it was in a very hasty manner, so that I shall not attempt to describe him to you at present. I intend, before I leave Scotland, to pass very near the place of his residence, (for he now very seldom leaves the country,) and shall perhaps find an opportunity to become better acquainted with him. Of the style of philosophizing adopted by him and his successor, I need not say any thing to you, who are so much better acquainted with the works of both than I am. I may just venture to hint, however, that their mode of studying the human mind, is perhaps better adapted for throwing light upon the intellectual faculties, and upon the association of ideas, than upon human nature in general. There can be no doubt that the mind is, like physical nature, a theatre of causes and effects; but it appears extremely doubtful whether the same mechanical mode of observation, which enables us to understand the qualities of material objects, and the effects which they are capable of producing on each other, will be equally successful in elucidating the generation of human thoughts and feelings. In observing the manner in which a train of ideas passes through the mind, is it possible to notice and understand all that is really going on within us? Can every thing which appears, be referred to its true source? From the mode in which images and conceptions succeed each other, we may perhaps infer some laws of suggestion—and from observing the sequence of propositions, we may arrive at the principles according to which intellectual operations take place—but such, probably, will be the most important results of intellectual operations, conducted according to Mr. Stewart's method. The scope and tendency of the different affections can never be gathered from the analyses of particular trains of thought, or by such a microscopic and divided mode of observation, as that which consists in watching the succession of ideas as they arise in the mind. It seems, indeed, quite improbable, that the affections ever can be made an object of science, or that their qualities and relations can ever be properly expressed in abstract propositions. Poetry and eloquence are alone capable of exem-

plifying them; and one may gather more true knowledge of all that most valuable, and perhaps most divine part of our nature, by studying one of Mr. Wordsworth's small pieces, such as Michael, the Brothers, or the Idiot Boy—or following the broken catches of multitudinous feelings, in the speeches of one such character as Madge Wildfire, than by a whole life-time spent in studying and imitating the style of observation exemplified by Mr. Stewart.

In regard to intellectual operations, it may be said, that a knowledge of their laws confers power, because it teaches method in conducting them. In regard to the laws of association, it may also be said, that knowledge is power, because it enables us to continue the succession of our ideas. But it appears very questionable, whether the empire of science can be extended much farther in this quarter. The power which is conferred by knowledge, is always of a merely calculating and mechanical sort, and consists in nothing higher than the adaptation of means to ends—and to suppose that man's moral being can ever be subjected to, or swayed by, a power so much lower than itself, is almost as revolting as the theory which refers all ideas and emotions to the past impressions upon the senses.

In studying the nature of the human affections, one object should be—to obtain repose and satisfaction for the moral feelings, by discriminating between good and evil. Knowledge is nothing in a scientific point of view, unless it can be accumulated and transferred from individual to individual, and unless it be as valid in one person's hands as in those of another; but this could never be the case with regard to a knowledge of the moral feelings.

I do not throw out these little remarks with a view to disparage the usefulness or excellence of Dugald Stewart's mode of philosophizing, so far as it goes. But it would be a very cold and barren way of thinking, to suppose, that through the medium of that species of observation which he chiefly makes use of, we have it in our power to become completely acquainted with human nature. And again, the habit of re-

posing too much confidence in the powers resulting from science, would have a tendency to terminate in utter supineness and lethargy of character among mankind; for, if it were expected that every thing could be forced to spring up as the mechanical and necessary result of scientific calculations, the internal springs of the mind would no longer be of the same consequence as before, and the accomplishment of a great many things might then be devolved upon, and intrusted to, an extraneous power, lodged in the hands of speculative men.

The true characteristic of science consists in this—that it is a thing which can be communicated to, and made use of by, all men who are endowed with an adequate share of mere intellect. The philosophy of moral feeling must always, on the other hand, approach nearer to the nature of poetry, whose influence varies according as it is perused by individuals of this or that character or taste. The finest opening to any book of psychology and ethics in the world, is that of Wordsworth's Excursion. That great poet, who is undoubtedly the greatest master that has for a long time appeared in the walks of the highest philosophy in England, has better notions than any Scotch metaphysician is likely to have, of the true sources, as well as the true effects, of the knowledge of man.

"——— Urania, I shall need
Thy guidance, or a greater muse, if such
Descend to earth, or dwell in highest Heaven!
For I must tread on shadowy ground, must sink
Deep—and, aloft ascending, breathe in worlds,
To which the Heaven of Heavens is but a veil.—
All strength—all terror, single or in bands,
That ever was put forth in personal form;
Jehovah—with his thunder, and the choir
Of shouting angels, and the empyreal thrones,
I pass them, unalarmed. Not chaos, not
The darkest pit of lowest Erebus,
Nor aught of blinder vacancy scooped out
By help of dreams, can breed such fear and awe
As fall upon us often, when we look

Into our Minds—into the Mind of Man,
My haunt, and the main region of my song."

After such words as these, I durst not venture upon any thing of a lowlier kind.

Farewell.

P. M.

LETTER XV.

TO THE SAME.

* * * * *

* * * * *

* * Next day I went to hear Professor P——'s lecture. I found him already engaged in addressing his class when I entered, but took my seat close by the door, so quietly as not to attract any notice from him. It was a very pleasing thing to see this fine old Archimedes with his reposed demeanour—(such as I have already described it to you)—standing beside his table covered with models, which he was making use of in some demonstrations relative to mechanical forces. There is something in the certainty and precision of the exact sciences, which communicates a stillness to the mind, and which, by calling in our thoughts from their own giddy and often harassing rounds, harmonizes our nature with the serenity of intellectual pleasure. The influence of such studies is very well exemplified in the deportment of this professor. In lecturing, he expresses himself in an easy and leisurely manner, highly agreeable to the listener, although he does not seem to study continuity or flow of diction, and although his delivery is sometimes a good deal impeded by hesitation with regard to the words he is to employ. I have already described his features to you; but perhaps their effect was finer

while he was engaged in this way, than I had before been prepared to find. I think one may trace in his physiognomy a great deal of that fine intellectual taste, which dictated the illustrations of the Huttonian Theory.

I waited to pay my respects to the professor, after the dismission of his class, and he invited me to walk with him to the New Observatory upon the Calton Hill. This building, which is not yet completed, owes its existence entirely to the liberality of a few private lovers of astronomy, and promises to form a beautiful and lasting monument of their taste. Mr. P—— himself laid the foundation-stone of it last year, and already it presents to the eye, what is, in my humble judgment, the finest architectural outline in the whole of this city. The building is not a large one; but its situation is such, as to render that a matter of comparatively trivial moment. Its fine portico, with a single range of Doric pillars supporting a graceful pediment, shaped exactly like that of the Parthenon—and over that again, its dome lifting itself lightly and airily in the clear mountain sky—and the situation itself, on the brink of that magnificent eminence, which I have already described to you, just where it looks towards the sea—altogether remind one of the best days of Grecian art and Grecian science, when the mariner knew Athens afar off from the Ægean, by the chaste splendour of pillars and temples that crowned the original rock of Theseus. If a few elms and plantains could be made to grow to their full dimensions around this rising structure, the effect would be the nearest thing in the world to that of the glorious scene which Plato has painted so divinely at the opening of his Republic.

After surveying the new building both without and within at great length, we quitted the summit of the hill, and began our descent. About half way down, there is a church-yard, which I had not before remarked particularly, and which, indeed, as Mr. P—— mentioned, has of late been much abridged in its dimensions, by the improvements that have taken place in this quarter of the city. He proposed that we should enter the burying-ground, in order to see the place

where David Hume is laid. There are few things in which I take a more true delight, than in visiting the graves of the truly illustrious dead, and I therefore embraced the proposal with eagerness. The philosopher reposes on the very margin of the rock, and above him his friends have erected a round tower, which, although in itself not very large, derives, like the Observatory on the other side, an infinite advantage from the nature of the ground on which it is placed, and is, in fact, one of the chief land-marks in every view of the city. In its form it is quite simple, and the flat roof and single urn in front give it a very classical effect. Already lichens and ferns and wall-flowers begin to creep over the surface, and a solitary willow-bush drops its long slender leaves over the edge of the roof, and breaks the outline in the air with a desolate softness.

There is no inscription, except the words DAVID HUME; and this is just as it ought to be. One cannot turn from them, and the thoughts to which they of necessity give birth, to the more humble names that cover the more humble tombs below and around, without experiencing a strange revulsion of ideas. The simple citizen that went through the world in a course of plain and quiet existence, getting children, and accumulating money to provide for them, occupies a near section of the same sod which covers the dust of him, who left no progeny behind him, except that of his intellect—and whose name must survive, in that progeny, so long as man retains any portion of the infirmity, or of the nobility of his nature. The poor man, the peasant, or the mechanic, whose laborious days provided him scantily with meat and raiment, and abundantly with sound sleep—he also has mingled his ashes with him, whose body had very little share either in his wants or his wishes—whose spirit alone was restless and sleepless, the Prince of Doubters. The poor homely partner of some such lowly liver, the wife and the mother and the widow, whose existence was devoted to soothing and sharing the asperities of adversity—who lived, and thought, and breathed in the affections alone, and, perhaps, yet lives some-

where in the affections of her children, or her children's children—she too, whose only hope and confidence were derived from the expectation of another life—she sleeps close beside one who walked upon the earth, not to feel, but to speculate, and was content to descend into her bosom, with scarcely one ray of hope beyond the dark and enduring sleep of nothingness.

> "These grassy heaps lie amicably close,
> Said I, like surges heaving in the wind,
> Upon the surface of a mountain's pool."—

Death, like misery, "makes us acquainted with strange bedfellows." But surely never was a scene of strange juxtaposition more pregnant with lessons of thoughtfulness than this.

Adieu.

P. M.

LETTER XVI.

TO THE SAME.

A PERSON whose eyes had been accustomed only to such places as the schools of Oxford, or Sir Christopher Pegge's lecture-room, would certainly be very much struck with the *primâ facie* mean condition of the majority of the students assembled at the prælections of these Edinburgh professors. Here and there one sees some small scattered remnant of the great flock of Dandies, trying to keep each other's high collars and stays in countenance, in a corner of the class-room; but these only heighten, by the contrast of their presence, the general effect of the slovenly and dirty mass which on every side surrounds them with its contaminating atmosphere; and upon the whole, nothing can be more distinct and visible, than that the greater part of the company are persons whose situation in life, had they been born in England, must have

left them no chance of being able to share the advantages of our academical education.

I could not help taking notice of this circumstance the other day to my friend W——; who not only admitted the justice of my observation, but went on to utter his comments on the fact I had observed, in a tone of opinion and sentiment, for which, I must confess, my own private reflections had by no means prepared me. So far from proceeding, as I had supposed every Scotchman in like circumstances would do, to point out the advantages which might be expected to arise, and which, in Scotland itself, had already, in fact, arisen, out of so liberal and extensive diffusion of the higher species of education, my friend seemed to have no hesitation in condemning the whole system as being not friendly, but eminently hostile, to the true interests both of science in general, and of his country.

Without at all understanding him in the literal sense of his words, I think it is possible that the result of his reflections may have really led him to doubt, whether the system which takes in so much may not be somewhat weakened and debased through the very extension of its surface. I can easily believe that he may be a little doubtful whether the obvious and distinct advantages which must spring out of such a system, may not be counterbalanced, upon the whole, by the disadvantages which I should suppose must be equally inseparable from the mode of carrying it into practical effect; in other words, whether the result of good may not be less considerable in the great issue than that of evil, both to the individuals themselves, and to the community, of whose general character so much must directly and indirectly be dependent upon theirs. For myself, I say even so much with great hesitation, concerning a subject of which I cannot imagine myself to have had time or opportunity for any adequate examination; and of which, even had I possessed more of time and opportunity than I have done, I am still suspicious that my own early prejudices might render it impossible I should form a fair and impartial judgment.

The expenses of University education, in the first place, amount in Scotland to no more than a very inconsiderable fraction of what they are in England. With us, we all know, a father of a family seldom thinks of sending his son to college, unless he can afford to give him an allowance of some £300 per annum, or thereabouts. It is, no doubt, quite possible, to have apartments in a college, to attend prayers in chapel, and eat commons in hall, and to arrive, after four years' residence, at the style and dignity of a Bachelor of Arts, without having disposal of so large an income. But, taking young men as they are, and as they always have been, it is needless to expect, that any one of them will easily submit to lie under any broad and distinct mark of inferiority to his fellows; and therefore it is, that we in common parlance speak of it as being impossible to live at Oxford or Cambridge, on less expensive terms than those I have mentioned. So long as our church retains her privileges and possessions, (which, thank God, I see no likelihood of her losing,) the benefices she has in her gift will always be enough to create a regular demand for a very large number of graduates born in the higher classes of society—so large a number, indeed, that even they alone would be able to give the *tone* in any University, and any College in England. And while this is so, young men of generous dispositions, who cannot afford to keep up with the *tone* thus given, would much rather be excused from entering upon a course of life, which must bring their incapacity of doing so continually before the eyes of other people, and of themselves. It would take a long time, moreover, to satisfy the great majority of English fathers of families, even in the more elevated walks of society, that a University education is a matter of so very great importance as to warrant them in running the risk of injuring the feelings and comfort of their children, by compelling them to submit to residing in college on inadequate means. I believe it is well, that, in England, character is generally regarded as a far more important thing than mere intellect: and I consider

the aversion I have just described, as one very honourable manifestation of this way of thinking.

In Scotland, feelings of an equally honourable kind have led to a very opposite way of thinking and acting. The poverty of the colleges themselves, or at least of most of them, has prevented the adoption of any such regular and formal style of academical existence, as that which prevails in other countries, and most of all in our own. Instead of being possessed of large and ancient landed estates, and extensive rights of patronage in the church, and elsewhere, and so of forming in itself a very great and formidable corporate body in the state, as the University of Oxford or Cambridge does with us; the University of Edinburgh, for example, is a very recent and contracted institution, which possesses scarcely any property or patronage of any kind beyond the money paid annually in fees by pupils to their professors, and the necessary influence which the high character of some of these individual professors must at times give to their favour and recommendation. The want of public or corporate splendour has taken away all occasion or pretence for large expenditure in private among the members of the University; and both the corporation, and the individuals, have long since learned to consider their honour as not in the least degree affected by the absence of all those external "shows and forms," which, with us, long habit has rendered such essential parts of every academical exercise and prospect. The barriers which prevent English parents and English sons from thinking of academical education, are thus entirely removed. Any young man who can afford to wear a decent coat, and live in a garret upon porridge or herrings, may, if he pleases, come to Edinburgh, and pass through his academical career, just as creditably as is required or expected. I am assured, that the great majority of the students here, have seldom more than £30 or £40 per annum, and that very many most respectable students contrive to do with little more than half so much money.

Whatever may be thought of the results of this plan, there

is no possibility that any man of good feeling should refuse his warmest admiration to the zeal both of the children and the parents by whose exertions it is carried into effect. The author of the Scotch novels has several times alluded, in a very moving way, to the hardships to which a poor man's family in Scotland will submit, for the sake of affording to one of its members even those scanty means which a Scottish University education demands. You must remember the touches of pathos which he has thrown over the otherwise ludicrous enough exertions made in this way by the parents of the redoubtable Dominie Sampson; and those of Reuben Butler, in the last Tales of My Landlord, are represented in much the same kind. I have seen a little book of Memoirs, lately written, and very well written, by a soldier of the 71st regiment, in which there occurs a still more affecting, because a real picture, of circumstances exactly similar. I question whether there can be imagined a finer display of the quiet heroism of affection and principle, than is afforded in the long and resolute struggle which the poor parents maintain—the pinching penury and self-denial to which they voluntarily submit, in order that their child may be enabled to procure advantages of which themselves are destitute, and which, when obtained, cannot fail to give him thoughts and ideas such as must, in spite of nature, draw some line of separation between him and them. There cannot be a nobler instance of the neglect of self—a more striking exemplification of the sublimity of the affections. Nor can the conduct of the son himself be regarded as much less admirable. The solitary and secluded life to which he devotes so many youthful years —the hard battle which he, too, must maintain against poverty, without any near voice of love to whisper courage into his bosom—the grief which he must feel when compelled to ask that which he well knows will be freely, but which, he too much fears, will be painfully given;—all these sorrows of poverty, united with those many sorrows and depressions which the merely-intellectual part of a young student's existence must always be sufficient to create—the doubts and

fears which must at times overcloud and darken the brightest intellect that ever expanded before the influence of exertion—the watching and tossing of over-excitement—the self-reproach of languor—the tightening of the heart-strings—and the blank wanderings of the brain—these things are enough to complete the gloomy fore-ground of a picture which would indeed require radiance in the distance to give it any measure of captivation. And yet these things are not more, unless books and men alike deceive us, than are actually operating at this moment in the persons of a very great proportion of the young men whom I have seen at work in the class-rooms of B—— and P——. Truly, I think there was too much of lightness in the remarks I made to you, a few days ago, concerning the first impressions of their external appearance and demeanour.

The worst view of the subject, however, still remains to be given. To what end does all this exertion—this noble and heroic exertion, lead? That is a question which nothing can hinder from crossing us every now and then, in the midst of all our most enthusiastic admiration. It is one which it is perhaps a wrong thing to attempt answering in any way; and I much fear it is one which will not admit of being answered in a satisfactory manner, either by you or by me. There are few splendid rewards of worldly honour held up before the eyes of the Scottish student. The same circumstances which enable him to aspire, enable hundreds and thousands to do as much as he does; and the hope of obtaining any of the few prizes which do exist, is divided among so many, that no man would venture to count his own individual chance as worthy of much consideration. The style of education and exertion to which he submits, are admirably fitted for sharpening and quickening the keenness of his understanding, but do not much tend to fill his mind with a store of thoughts, feelings, and images, on which it might repose itself, and in which he might possess for ever the means of a quiet and contemplative happiness. He is made a keen doubter, and a keen disputer; and in both of these qualities

there is no doubt he will at first have pleasure. But in neither is he furnished with the elements of such pleasure as may endure with him, and increase with him throughout a laborious, and, above all, it may be, a solitary life. He is not provided with such an armoury of recollections as that which the scholar (properly so called) presents against the pressure of corporeal and mental evils.

Without much prospect, then, of any great increase of wordly goods, and without procuring to himself any very valuable stronghold of peaceful meditation, the Scottish student submits to a life of such penury and difficulty, as would almost be sufficient to counterbalance the possession even of the advantages which he has *not*. At the end of his academical career, he probably finds himself either a burden upon his relations, or providing for himself by the discharge of some duties, which might have been as well discharged without so expensive a preparation. Is it worth while to bear so much, in order to have a chance of gaining so little? As Mr. Macleod says in Miss Edgeworth's novel—"It may be doubted;" and yet perhaps it cannot be doubted without somewhat of a sin against the higher parts of our nature. But such sins we all commit often enough, both consciously and unconsciously.

P. M.

LETTER XVII.

TO THE SAME.

I REGARD, then, the academical institutions of England and Scotland, as things specifically distinct, both in their structure and in their effects. The Universities, here, educate, in proportion to the size and wealth of the two countries, twenty times a larger number than ours in England educate. They educate these persons in a very different way, and for totally

different purposes—in reality at least, if not in profession. They diffuse over every part of the kingdom, and over many parts of the neighbouring kingdoms, a mighty population of men, who have received a kind and measure of education which fits them for taking a keen and active management in the affairs of ordinary life. But they seldom send forth men who are so thoroughly accomplished in any one branch of learning, as to be likely to possess, through that alone, the means of attaining to eminence; and, what is worse, the course of the studies which have been pursued under their direction, has been so irregular and multifarious, that it is a great chance whether any one branch of occupation may have made such a powerful and commanding impression on the imagination of the student, as might induce him afterwards to perfect and complete for himself what the University can only be said to have begun.

In England, the object of the Universities is not, at present, at all of this kind. In order to prepare men for discharging the duties of ordinary life, or even for discharging the duties of professions requiring more education than is quite common in any country, it is not thought necessary that the University should ever be resorted to. Those great and venerable institutions have both existed from the very commencement of the English monarchy, and have been gradually strengthened and enriched into their present condition, by the piety and the munificence of many successive generations of kings and nobles. They are frequented by those only who may be called upon at some future period to discharge the most sacred and most elevated duties of English citizenship; and the magnificence of the establishments themselves carries down a portion of its spirit into the humblest individual who connects himself with them. The student is lodged in a palace; and when he walks abroad, his eyes are fed on every side with the most splendid assemblages of architectural pomp and majesty which our island can display. He dines in a hall whose lofty compartments are occupied with the portraitures of illustrious men, who, of old, underwent

the same discipline in which he is now engaged, amidst the same appropriate and impressive accompaniments of scene and observance. He studies in his closet the same books which have, for a thousand years, formed the foundation of the intellectual character of Englishmen. In the same chapel wherein the great and good men of England were wont to assemble, he listens, every evening and every morning, to the same sublime music and sublimer words, by which their devotion was kindled, and their faith sustained. He walks under the shadow of the same elms, plantains, and sycamores, beneath whose branches the thoughtful steps of Newton, or Bacon, Locke, and Milton, have sounded. These old oaks, which can no longer give shade or shelter, but which still present their bare and gnarled limbs to the elements around him—they were the contemporaries of Alfred. Here the memories of kings and heroes, and saints and martyrs, are mingled for ever with those of poets and philosophers; and the Spirit of the Place walks visible, shedding all around one calm and lofty influence, alike refreshing to the affections and to the intellect—an influence which blends together, in indissoluble union, all the finest elements of patriotism, and loyalty, and religion.

That the practical usefulness of these institutions would be in any respect improved by any considerable change in their course of studies, I am far from believing; even were I certain that it would be so, I should still be very far from wishing to see such a change adopted. I am satisfied abundantly that they should continue as they are; and, not having much faith in the new doctrine of the perfectibility of human nature, I doubt whether, let them be altered as they might, the men of their production would be much altered for the better. I do not think that at our time of day in national existence, it is at all wise or desirable to begin learning new fashions. The world is not in its infancy: and where is the nation the world has produced, which can present a more glorious array of great and holy names than ours? To me, this is a sufficient proof, that, we have not all the while been stumbling in

the dark, without the rays of the true lamp to enlighten us in our progress. The steady and enduring radiance of our national Past, cannot be the mere delusion of our self-love; for even the voice of our enemies is for ever lifted up in its praise. What future times may judge of the Present, and what our national Future may be, it is a little out of our power to decide. But I, for my part, have no fear that they who peruse in distant years the records of this age, will reproach us with having been a degenerate people. Neither do I expect that at any future period the national character can be greatly changed, without, at the same time, being greatly degenerate.

Even in regard to many of those peculiarities of our system, which are the most easy and the most favoured marks of the wit of its enemies, I am persuaded that a compliance with what at first sight seems to be the most liberal spirit, would, in the end, be found productive of any thing but fortunate effects. It is very easy, for example, to stigmatize the rules which exclude, from more or less of our privileges, all who are not members of our national church, with the names of bigotry, intolerance, and superstition. It should be remembered, however, that these regulations were the work of men, whom even our bitterest revilers would not dare to insult with such language; and till we see some good reason to be ashamed of them, we may be pardoned, at least, if we refuse to be entirely ashamed of their work. If it be fitting that we should have a National Church, I think it is equally fitting that the Church should have the National Universities. These do not profess to monopolize all the means of instruction; the number of great names, in all departments, which have grown up without their sphere of protection, would be more than enough to give such pretensions the lie, were they so audacious as to set them forth. But they profess to educate a certain number of persons, of a certain class, in a certain set of principles, which have been connected with that class throughout all the best years of our history—and which, through the persons of that class in former times, have be-

come identified with our national existence, and must everywhere be recognized as entering largely and powerfully into the formation of our national character. In a word, they are designed to keep up the race of English gentlemen, imbued with those thoughts and feelings, with that illumination and that belief, which, as exemplified both in the words and in the actions of preceding years, having rendered the name which they bear second to none, perhaps, superior to any which the world has ever witnessed.

Instead then of joining in with that senseless spirit of railing, wherewith Scotchmen are too often accustomed to talk of the English, and Englishmen of the Scottish Universities, I please myself in thinking that the two institutions have different objects, and that they are both excellent in their different ways. That each system might borrow something with advantage from the other, is very possible, but I respect both of them too much to be fond of hasty and rash experiments. In our great empire we have need of many kinds of men; it is necessary that we should possess, within our own bounds, the means of giving to each kind that sort of preparation which may best fit them for the life to which they are destined. So there be no want of unity in the general character and feeling of the whole nation, considered as acting together, the more ways the intellect of the nation has, in which to shoot itself out and display its energies, the better will it be:—the greater the variety of walks of exertion and species of success, the greater the variety of stimulus applied; and the greater that spirit of universal activity, without which minds become stagnant like fish pools, the greater is our hope of long and proudly preserving our high place in the estimation of the world.

I shall return to the Universities in my next.

P. M.

LETTER XVIII.

TO LADY JOHNES.

DEAR AUNT,

If you meet with Mr. David Williams, of Yris, he will tell you that I send him a long letter, every other day, filled with histories of dinner parties, and sketches of the Edinburgh Literati; and yet, such is my diligence in my vocation of tourist, I am laying up stores of anecdotes about the northern beau monde, and making drawings in crayon, of the northern beauties, which, I flatter myself, will be enough to amuse your ladyship half the Autumn, after I return to you. There is a very old rule, to do like the Romans when you are in Rome; and the only merit I lay claim to on the present occasion, resolves itself into a rigid observance of this sage precept. It is the fashion here for every man to lead two or three different kinds of lives all at once, and I have made shift to do somewhat like my neighbours. In London, a lawyer is a lawyer, and he is nothing more; for going to the play or the House of Commons, now and then, can scarcely be considered as any serious interruption of his professional habits and existence. In London, in like manner, a gay man is nothing but a gay man; for, however he may attempt to disguise the matter, whatever he does out of the world of gayety is intended only to increase his consequence in it. But here I am living in a city, which thrives both by law and by gayeties, and, would you believe it?—a very great share of the practice of both of these mysteries lies in the very same hands. It is this, so far as I can judge, which constitutes what the logicians would call the differential quality of the society of Edinburgh. It is at this time of the year at least, a kind of melange of London, Bath, and Cheltenham; and I am inclined to think, that, upon due examination, you would find it to be in several particulars, a more agreeable place than any of these. In many other particulars, I think any rational per-

son would pronounce it, without difficulty, to be more absurd than any of them.

The removal of the residence of the sovereign has had the effect of rendering the great nobility of Scotland very indifferent about the capital. There is scarcely one of the *Premiere Noblesse*, I am told, that retains even the appearance of supporting a house in Edinburgh; and by far the greater part of them are quite as ignorant of it, as of any other provincial town in the island. The Scotch courts of law, however, are all established in this place, and this has been sufficient to enable Edinburgh to keep the first rank among the cities of Scotland, which, but for them, it seems extremely unlikely she should have been able to accomplish. For the more the commercial towns thrive, the more business is created for this legal one; and the lawyers of Edinburgh may be said to levy a kind of custom upon every bale of goods that is manufactured in this part of the island, and a no less regular excise upon every article of merchandize that is brought into it from abroad. In this way, (to such wonderful exactness has the matter been brought,) it may be said, that every great merchant in Glasgow pays large salaries to some two or three members of the law in Edinburgh, who conduct the numerous litigations that arise out of a flourishing business with great civility; and with greater civility still, the more numerous litigations which attend the untwisting and dissevering of the Gordian knot of mercantile difficulties and embarrassments. And so, indeed, there is scarcely much exaggeration in the common saying, that every house which a man, not a lawyer, builds out of Edinburgh, enables a man, who is a lawyer, to build another equally comfortable in Edinburgh.

A very small share of the profits set apart for the nourishment of this profession falls into the hands of the first branch of it—the Barristers. These are still, in general, although not so uniformly as in former times, younger sons of good families, who have their fortunes to make, but who have been brought up in a way more calculated to make them adepts in

spending than in getting. The greater part of them, moreover, seldom have any opportunity of realizing much money, were they inclined to do so; for, with the exception of some six or eight, who monopolize the whole of the large fees, and the far greater share of the small ones, the most of the advocates may think themselves extremely fortunate, if, after passing eight or ten years at the bar, they are able to make as much by their profession as may suffice for the support of a family, in the most quiet and moderate style of living. A vast number of those who come to the bar have no chance, almost no hope, of getting into any tolerable practice; but as there are a great number of offices of various degrees of honour and emolument, which can only be filled by members of the Faculty of Advocates, they are contented to wear the gown year after year, in the expectation of at last being able to step into the possession of one of these births, by means of some connections of blood, or marriage, or patronage. One should at first sight say, that this must be rather a heartless kind of drudgery; but, such as it is, it is submitted to by a very great number of well-educated and accomplished gentlemen, who not only keep each other in countenance with the rest of the world, but, what is much better, render this mode of life highly agreeable in itself. These persons constitute the chief community of loungers and talkers in Edinburgh; and such is the natural effect of their own family connections, and the conventional kind of respect accorded to the name of their profession, that their influence may be considered as extending over almost the whole of the northern part of the island. They make the nearest approach, of any class of men now existing, to the modes of Templar-life described by Addison and Steele; for, as to the Temple wits and critics of our day, you know they are now sadly "shorn of their beams," and are, indeed, regarded by the ruling powers of the West-end—the οι εν τιλει, of Albemarle-street, &c.—as forming little better than a sort of upper form of the Cockney-school.

The chief wealth of the profession, however, if not the

chief honour, is lodged with the attorneys, or, as they are here called, the Writers. Of these there is such an abundance in this city, that I cannot for my life understand by what means they all contrive to live; and those of them with whom I have become acquainted, I do assure you live well. They are sub-divided into various classes, of which the highest is that of the Writers or Clerks to the Signet, so called because they alone have the privilege of drawing particular kinds of deeds, to which the king's signet is affixed. Even of these there are many hundreds in actual practice at this moment, and many of them have realized large fortunes, and retired from business to enjoy the *otium cum dignitate*. It may be said, that almost every foot of land in Scotland pays something to the Writers to the Signet; for there is scarcely an estate in Scotland, the proprietor of which does not entrust the management of the whole of his affairs to one of their order. The connection which exists between them and the landed interest is thus of the most intimate nature. The country gentlemen of Scotland, from whatever causes, are generally very much in debt. Their writers, or, as they call them, their agents or *doers*, are of necessity acquainted with the many secrets which men in debt must have; they are themselves the bankers and creditors of their clients. In short, when a gentleman changes his *man of business*, his whole affairs must undergo a complete revolution and convulsion; and in Scotland, it is a much easier thing to get rid of one's wife, than of one's *doer*.

These advocates and rich writers may be considered as forming the *nucleus* of the society of Edinburgh. Their connections of birth and business bind them so closely with the landed gentry, that these last come to Edinburgh principally in order to be in their neighbourhood; these again draw with them a part of the *minor noblesse*, and the whole of the idle military men who can afford it. Of late years also, the gentry of some of the northern English counties have begun to come hither, in preference to going to York as they used to do; and out of all this medley of materials, the actual

mass of the society of Edinburgh is formed. I mean the winter society of Edinburgh; for, in the summer months—that is from April till Christmas—the town is commonly deserted by all, except those who have ties of real business to connect them with it. Nay, during a considerable portion of that time, it loses, as I am informed, the greater part even of its eminent lawyers, and has quite as green and desolate an appearance, as the fashionable squares in London have about the falling of the leaf.

The medley of people, thus brought together for a few months every year to inhabit a few streets in this city, cannot afford to split their forces very minutely, so as to form many different spheres of society, according to their opinions of their relative rank and importance. It is now admitted everywhere, that no party is worth the going to, unless it be a crowded one; now, it is not possible to form a party here that shall be at once select and crowded. The dough and the leaven must go together to make up the loaf, and the wives of lords and lairds, and advocates, and writers, must be contented to club their forces, if they are to produce any thing that deserves the honourable name of *a squeeze*. Now and then, indeed, a person of the very highest importance, may, by great exertion, succeed in forming one exception to this rule. But the rule is in general a safe one; and the Edinburgh parties are in the main mixed parties. I do not mean that they are mixed in a way that renders them at all disagreeable, even to those who have been accustomed to the style of society in much greater capitals, but that they are mixed in a way of which no example is to be found in the parties of London, or indeed of any European capital, except the Paris of the present time. People visit each other in Edinburgh with all the appearance of cordial familiarity, who, if they lived in London, would imagine their difference of rank to form an impassable barrier against such intercourse. Now, although the effect may not amount to any thing absolutely unpleasant, there is no question that this admission of persons not educated in the true circles, must be

seen and felt upon the general aspect of the society of Edinburgh, and that, upon the whole, this society is, in consequence of their admission, less elegant than might otherwise have been expected in the capital of such a country as Scotland. * * * *

Your's very affectionately,

P. M.

LETTER XIX.

TO THE SAME.

Dear Aunt,

However composed and arranged, the routs and balls of this place are, during their season, piled upon each other with quite as much bustle and pomp as those even of London. Every night, some half a dozen ladies are *at home*, and every thing that is in the wheel of fashion, is carried round, and thrown out in due course at the door of each of them. There is at least one regular ball every evening, and beside this, half of the routs are in their waning hours transformed into carpet-dances, wherein quadrilles are performed in a very penseroso method to the music of the piano-forte. Upon the whole, however, I am inclined to be of opinion, that even those who most assiduously frequent these miscellaneous assemblages are soon sickened, if they durst but confess the truth, of the eternal repetition of the same identical crowd displaying its noise and pressure under so many different roofs. Far be it from me to suspect, that there are not some faces, of which no eye can grow weary; but, in spite of all their loveliness, I am certainly of opinion, that the impression made by the belles of Edinburgh would be more powerful, were it less frequently reiterated. Among the hundred young ladies, whose faces are exhibited in these parties, a very small proportion, of course, can have any claims to that higher

kind of beauty, which, like the beauty of painting or sculpture, must be gazed on for months or years before the whole of its charm is understood and felt as it ought to be. To see every evening, for months in succession, the same merely pretty, or merely pleasing faces, is at the best a fatiguing business. One must soon become as familiar with the contour of every cheek, and the sweep of every ringlet, as one is with the beauties or defects of one's own near relatives. And if it be true, that defects in this way come to be less disagreeable, it is no less true, *per contra*, that beauties come to have less of the natural power of their fascination.

The effects of this unceasing flood of gayety, then, are not perhaps so very favourable as might be expected to the great object of all gayeties—the entrapping of the unfortunate lords of the creation. But this is not the worst of the matter. I am really very free from any very puritanical notions, in regard to the pleasures of human life; but I do sincerely, and in honest earnestness doubt, whether any good is gained to the respectable citizens of this town, by having their wives and daughters immersed, for so considerable a portion of the year, in a perpetual round of amusements, so fatiguing to their bodies and their minds, and so destructive, I should fear, of much of that quiet and innocent love of home and simple pleasures, in which the true charm of the female character ought to consist, and in which its only true charm does at this moment consist, in the opinion of all men of sense and feeling. It is a very pretty thing, no doubt, to see a young lady dressed with Parisian flowers and Parisian gauzes, and silk slippers and an Indian fan, and the whole &c. of fashionable array: But I question whether this be, after all, the style in which a young man of any understanding sees a young lady with most danger to his peace. It is very well that people in the more quiet walks of life should not be ignorant of what goes on among those that are pleased to style themselves their betters: But, I do think that this is rather too entire and *bona fide* an initiation into a train of existence, which is, luckily, as inconsistent with the per-

manet happiness, as it is with the permanent duties, of those who cannot afford all their lives to be mere fine ladies.

For myself, after living so quietly in Cardigan, I have been on the whole much pleased with the full and leisurely view I have now had even of this out-skirt of the beau-monde. I do not think matters have undergone any improvement since I last peeped into its precincts. The ladies are undoubtedly by no means so well-dressed as they were a few years ago, before these short waists and enormous *tetes* of flowers and ringlets were introduced from Paris. There is, perhaps, no one line in the whole of the female form, in which there lies so much gracefulness as in the outline of the back. Now, that was seen as it ought to be a few years ago; but now every woman in Britain looks as if her clothes were hung about her neck by a peg. And then the truly Spartan exposure of the leg, which seems now to be in fashion, is, in my judgment, the most unwise thing in the whole world; for any person can tell well enough from the shape of the foot and ancle, whether the limb be or be not handsome; and what more would the ladies have? Moreover, the fashion has not been allowed to obtain its ascendancy without evident detriment to the interests of the majority; for I have never yet been in any place where there were not more limbs that would gain by being concealed, than by being exposed. But, in truth, even those who have the shape of a Diana, may be assured that they are not, in the main, gainers by attracting too much attention to some of their beauties. I wonder that they do not recollect and profit by the exquisite description of the Bride, in Sir John Suckling's poem of the Wedding:——

> "Her feet beneath her petticoat,
> Like little mice stole in and out,
> As if they fear'd the light."

As for those, who, with bad shapes, make a useless display of their legs, I must own, I have no excuse for their folly. I know well enough, that it is a very difficult thing to form any proper opinion about one's own *face;* because it is univer-

sally admitted that faces, which have no regularity of feature, may often be far more charming than those which have, and, of course, those who are sensible enough to perceive, that their heads could not stand the test of sculpture, may be very easily pardoned for believing, that their expressiveness might still render them admirable studies for a painter. But as to limbs—I really am quite at a loss to conceive how any person should labour under the least difficulty in ascertaining, in the most exact way, whether handsomeness may, or may not, be predicated concerning any given pair of legs or arms in existence. Their beauty is entirely that of Form, and by looking over a few books of prints, or a few plaster-of-Paris casts, the dullest eye in the world may learn, in the course of a single forenoon, to be almost as good a critic in calves and ancles as Canova himself. Yet nothing can be more evident, than that the great majority of young ladies are most entirely devoid of any ideas concerning the beauty of Form, either in themselves, or in others; they never take the trouble to examine any such matters minutely, but satisfy themselves with judging by the general air and result. In regard to other people, this may do very well; but it is a very bad plan with respect to themselves.

Even you, my dear lady Johnes, are a perfect tyro in this branch of knowledge. I remember, only the last time I saw you, you were praising, with all your might, the legs of Colonel B——, those flimsy worthless things, that looked as if they were bandaged with linen rollers from the heel to the knee. I beg you would look at the Apollo Belvidere, the Fighting Gladiator, and the Farnese Hercules. There are only three handsome kinds of legs in the world, and in these, you have a specimen of each of the three—I speak of gentlemen. As for your own sex, the Venus is the only true model of female form in existence, and yet such is your culpable ignorance of yourselves, that I devoutly believe she would be pronounced a very clumsy person, were she to come into the Aberystwith ball room. You may say what you will, but I still assert, and I will prove it if you please, by pen and pen-

cil, that, with one pair of exceptions, the best legs in Cardigan are Mrs. P——'s. As for Miss J—— D——'s, I think they are frightful

* * * * *——†

It is a great mistake under which the Scotch people lie, in supposing themselves to be excellent dancers; and yet one hears the mistake re-echoed by the most sensible, sedate, and dance-abhorring Presbyterians one meets with. If the test of good dancing were activity, there is, indeed, no question, the northern beaux and belles might justly claim the pre-eminence over their brethren and sisters of the south. In an Edinburgh ball room, there appears to be the same pride of bustle, the same glorying in muscular agitation and alertness—the same "*sudor immanis*," to use the poet's phrase, which used of old to distinguish the sports of the Circus or the Campus Martius. But this is all;—the want of grace is as conspicuous in their performances, as the abundance of vigour. We desiderate the conscious towerlike poise—the easy, slow, unfatiguing glide of the fair pupils of D'Estainville. To say the truth, the ladies in Scotland dance in common pretty much like our country lasses at a harvest home. They kick and pant as if the devil were in them; and, when they are young and pretty, it is undoubtedly no disagreeable thing to be a spectator of their athletic display; but I think they are very ignorant of dancing as a science. Comparatively few of them manage their feet well, and of these few what a very insignificant portion know any thing about that equally important part of the art—the management of the arms. And then how absurdly they thrust out their shoulder blades! How they neglect the undulation of the back! One may com-

† A great part of this letter is omitted in the second edition, in consequence of the displeasure its publication gave to certain individuals in Cardiganshire. I hope I need not say how much I was grieved, when I learned in what way some of the passages had been regarded by several ladies, who have not a more sincere admirer than myself. As for the gentleman, who chose to take what I said of him in so much dudgeon, he will observe, that I have allowed what I said to remain exactly *in statu quo*, which I certainly should not have done, had he expressed his resentment in the proper manner.

pare them to fine masses of silver, the little awkward workmanship bestowed on which rather takes from, than adds to the natural beauty of the materials. As for the gentlemen, *they* seldom display even vigour and animation, unless they be half cut—and they never display any thing else.

It is fair, however, to mention, that in the true indigenous dances of the country, above all in the reel (the few times I have seen it,) these defects seem in a great measure to vanish, so that ambition and affectation are, after all, at the bottom of their bad dancing, in the present day, as well as of their bad writing. The quadrille, notwithstanding, begins to take with the soil, and the girls can already go through most of its manœuvres without having recourse to their fans. But their beaux continue, certainly, to perform these new fangled evolutions in a way that would move the utmost spleen of a Parisian butcher. What big, lazy, clumsy fellows one sees lumbering cautiously, on toes that should not be called light and fantastic, but rather heavy and syllogistic. It seems that there goes a vast deal of ratiocination to decide upon the moves of their game. The automaton does not play chess with such an air of lugubrious gravity. Of a surety, Terpsichore was never before worshipped by such a solemn set of devotees. One of our own gloomy Welsh Jumpers, could he be suddenly transported among some *sets* that I have seen, would undoubtedly imagine himself to be in a saltatory prayer meeting; and yet these good people, put them fairly into a reel, can frisk it about with all possible demonstrations of hilarity. They prefer the quadrille, I imagine, upon something of the same principle which leads a maid servant to spend her two shillings on a tragedy rather than on a comedy. I could not help in my own mind likening these dolorous *pas seuls* performed in rotation by each of the quadrillers, and then succeeded by the more clamorous display of sadness in their *chaine Angloise*, &c. to the account which Miss Edgeworth gives us of the Irish *lyke wake*, wherein each of the cousins chants a stave of lamentation, *solo*, and then the whole generation of them join in the screaming treble of the choral

ulululuh! hu! "Why did you leave the potatoes?" "What ailed thee, Pat, with the buttermilk!" &c. &c. &c.

The *waltz* has been even more unfortunate than the quadrille; it is still entirely an exotic in the North. Nor, in truth, am I much inclined to find fault with the prejudices which have checked the progress of this fascinating dance among the disciples of John Knox and Andrew Melville. I really am of opinion, that it might have been as well, had we of the South been equally shy of the importation.

As for myself, I assure you, that ever since I spent a week at Lady L——'s, and saw those great fat girls of her's waltzing every night with that odious Dr. B——, I cannot endure the very name of the thing. By the way, I met the other day with a very nice poem, entitled, "Waltz—an Apostrophic Hymn, by Francis Horaem, Esq.;" and as I think you have never seen it, I shall transcribe a few lines for your amusement.

"Borne on the breath of Hyperborean gales,
From Hamburgh's port (while Hamburgh yet had *Mails*,)
Ere yet unlucky Fame—compelled to creep
To snowy Gottenburgh—was chilled to sleep;
Or, starting from her slumbers, deigned arise,
Heligoland! to stock thy mart with lies;
While unburnt Moscow yet had news to send,
Nor owed her fiery exit to a friend:
She came—Waltz came—and with her certain sets
Of true despatches, and as true Gazettes:
Then flamed of Austerlitz the blest despatch,
Which Moniteur nor Morning Post can match;
And—almost crushed beneath the glorious news,
Ten plays—and forty tales of Kotzebue's;
One envoy's letters, six composers' airs,
And loads from Frankfort and from Leipsig fairs;
Meiner's four volumes upon woman kind,
Like Lapland witches, to ensure a wind;
Brunk's heaviest tome for ballast, and, to back it,
Of Heyné, such as should not sink the packet.

"Fraught with this cargo—and her fairest freight,
Delightful Waltz, on tiptoe for a mate,
The welcome vessel reached the genial strand,
And round her flocked the daughters of the land.
* * * * *

Not lovelorn Quixote—when his Sancho thought
The knight's fandango friskier than it ought;
Not soft Herodias, when, with winning tread,
Her nimble feet danced off another's head;
Not Cleopatra on her galley's deck,
Displayed so much of *leg*, or more of *neck*,
Than thou, ambrosial Waltz, when first the moon
Beheld thee twirling to a Saxon tune!

"To you—ye husbands of ten years! whose brows
Ache with the annual tribute of a spouse;
To you, of nine years less—who only bear
The budding sprouts of those that you *shall* wear,
With added ornaments around them rolled,
Of native brass, or law awarded gold;
To you—ye matrons, ever on the watch
To mar a son's, or make a daughter's match;
To you—ye children of—whom chance accords,
Always the ladies' and *sometimes* their lords';
To you—ye single gentlemen! who seek
Torments for life, or pleasures for a week;
As Love or Hymen your endeavours guide,
To gain your own, or snatch another's bride:
To one and all the lovely stranger came,
And every ball-room echoes with her name.

"Endearing Waltz—to thy more melting tune
Bow Irish jig—and ancient rigadoon;
Scotch reels avaunt!—and country dance forego
Your future claims to each fantastic toe;
Waltz—Waltz—alone both arms and legs demands,
Liberal of feet—and lavish of her hands;
Hands which may freely range in public sight,
Where ne'er before—but—pray 'put out the light.'
Methinks the glare of yonder chandelier
Shines much too far—or I am much too near;
And true, though strange—Waltz whispers this remark,
'My slippery steps are safest in the dark.'
But here the Muse with due decorum halts,
And lends her longest petticoat to 'Waltz.'

"Observant travellers! of every time,
Ye quartos! published upon every clime;
O say, shall dull Romaika's heavy round,
Fandango's wriggle, or Bolero's bound;
Can Egypt's Almas—tantalizing groupe—
Columbia's caperers to the warlike whoop—

Can aught from cold Kamschatka to Cape Horn,
With Waltz compare, or after Waltz be borne?
Ah no! from Morier's pages up to Galt's,
Each tourist pens a paragraph for 'Waltz.'

"Shades of those belles, whose reigns began of yore,
With George the Third's—and ended long before;
Though in your daughters' daughters yet you thrive,
Burst from your lead, and be yourselves alive!
Back to the ball-room speed your spectred host;
Fools' paradise is dull to that you lost;
No treacherous powder bids Conjecture quake,
No stiff-starched stays make meddling fingers ache;
(Transferred to those ambiguous things that ape
Goats in their visage, women in their shape;)
No damsel faints when rather closely pressed,
But more caressing seems when most caressed;
Superfluous hartshorn and reviving salts,
Both banished by the sovereign cordial, 'Waltz.'

* * * * *

Though gentle Genlis, in her strife with Stael,
Would e'en proscribe thee from a Paris ball;
Thee fashion hails—from Countesses to Queens,
And maids and valets waltz behind the scenes;
Wide and more wide thy witching circle spreads,
And turns—if nothing else—at least our heads;
With thee e'en clumsy cits attempt to bounce,
And cockneys practise what they can't pronounce.
Gods! how the glorious theme my strain exalts,
And rhyme finds partner rhyme in praise of 'Waltz.'"

And now, my dear aunt, I have surely written to you, at the least, with most dutiful fullness.

P. M.

LETTER XX.

TO THE REV. DAVID WILLIAMS.

DEAR WILLIAMS,

THE life I have led here has been such a strange mixture of all sorts of occupations, that were I to send you a literal diary of my transactions, I believe you would not fail to discover abundant room for doubting the authenticity of the MS. I shall therefore reserve the full and entire history of this part of my existence, till I may have opportunity of communicating it to you *viva voce* over a bottle of Binn D, and proceed in the meantime, as I have been doing, to give you little glimpses and fragments of it, exactly in the order that pleases to suggest itself.

In Smollet's time, according to the inimitable and unquestionable authority of our cousin, Matthew Bramble, no stranger could sleep more than a single night in Edinburgh, with the preservation of any thing like an effectual incognito. In those days, as I have already told you, the people all inhabited in the Old Town of Edinburgh—packed together, family above family, for aught I know, clan above clan, in little more than one street, the houses of which may, upon an average, be some dozen stories in height. The aerial elevation, at which an immense proportion of these people had fixed their abodes, rendered it a matter of no trifling moment to ascend to them; and a person in the least degree affected with asthma, might as soon have thought of mounting the Jungfrau, as of paying regular devoirs to any of the fair cynosures of these ὑπερτατα δωματα. The difficulty of access, which thus prevented many from undertaking any ascents of the kind, was sufficient to prevent all those who did undertake them, from entering rashly on their pilgrimages. No man thought of mounting one of those gigantic staircases, without previously ascertaining that the object of his intended visit was at home—unless it might be some Hannibal fresh

from the Highlands, and accustomed, from his youth upwards, to dance all his minuets on Argyle's bowling-green. To seek out a stranger among a hundred or two such staircases, was of course an undertaking beyond the patience even of a person who had enjoyed such an education as this; and so it became a matter of absolute necessity, that Edinburgh should possess some body of citizens set apart, and destined *ab ova*, for climbing staircases, and carrying messages.

From this necessity, sprung the high lineage of "the Cadies of Auld Reekie." When I use the word *lineage*, I do not mean to say that their trade ran in their blood, or that the cadies, as the Lake poet sings,

> "To sire from grandsire, and from sire to son,
> Throughout their generations, did pursue
> With purpose, and hereditary love,
> Most stedfast and unwavering, the same course
> Of labour, not unpleasant, nor unpaid."

The cadies bore more resemblance in this respect to the Janissaries and Mamelukes of Modern, than to the hereditary hammermen, cooks, physicians, and priests of Ancient Egypt. The breed of them was not kept up in the usual way,

> "By ordinance of matrimonial love;"

but by continued levies of fresh recruits from the same rugged wilds, wherein alone, the *Genus Iapeti* was supposed to retain sufficient vigour for the production of individuals, adapted for so aspiring a course of life. Every year brought from the fastnesses of Lochaber and Braemar, a new supply of scions to be engrafted upon the stock rooted immoveably in the heart of Auld Reekie—so that season after season, the tree of the cadies, like that of Virgil, might be said,

> "Mirari novas frondes et non sua poma."

However produced and sustained—whatever might be the beauties or the blemishes of their pedigree—this race continued for many generations, to perform with the same zeal

and success the same large variety of good offices to the citizens of Edinburgh. The cadie preserved amidst all his functions not a little of the air and aspect natural to him in his own paternal wilderness;

> "A savage wildness round him hung,
> As of a dweller out of doors;
> In his whole figure and his mien
> A savage character was seen,
> Of mountains and of dreary moors."

He climbed staircases with the same light and elastic spring which had been wont to carry him unfatigued to the brow of Cairngorm or Ben-Nevis; and he executed the commands of his employer *pro tempore*, whatever they might be, in the same spirit of unquestioning submission and thorough-going zeal, with which he had been taught from his infancy to obey the orders of Maccallamore, Glengarry, Gordon, Grant, or whosoever the chieftain of his clan might be. In order to qualify him for the exercise of this laborious profession, it was necessary that the apprentice-cadie should make himself minutely familiar with every stair-case, every house, every family, and every individual in the city, and to one who had laid in this way a sound and accurate foundation of information, it could be no difficult matter to keep on a level with the slight flood of mutation, which the city and its population was at that period accustomed to. The moment a stranger arrived in Edinburgh, his face was sure to attract the observation of some of this indefatigable tribe, and they knew no rest till they had ascertained his name, residence, and condition—considering it, indeed, as a sort of insult upon their body, that any man should presume to live within the bounds of their jurisdiction, and yet remain unpenetrated by the perspicacity of their unwearied *espionage*. But why should I say any more of this race?—They are now gathered to their fathers; and their deeds, are they not written in the Book of the Expedition of Humphrey Clinker?

Although, however, the original and regular fraternity no longer exists, and although, indeed, the change which has

taken place, both in the residence and in the manners of the inhabitants, has removed almost all shadow of pretence for the existence of any such fraternity—Edinburgh is still possessed of a species of men who retain the name, and, in so far as the times permit, the functions of the cadies. At the corner of every street is usually to be seen a knot of these fellows lounging on a wooden bench in expectation of employment. They are very busy in the evenings during the gay season of the year; for they are exclusively the bearers of the chairs which convey the beaux and belles from one rout and ball to another; but even at that season, their mornings, for the most part, are passed in a state of complete inaction. A pack of sorely blackened cards, or an old rotten backgammon board, furnishes a small proportion with something like occupation; but the greater part are contented with an indefatigable diligence in the use of tobacco, which they seem to consume indifferently in all its shapes—smoking, chewing, and snuffing, with apparently the same intensity of satisfaction. Whenever I pass one of these groupes, my ears are saluted with accents, which the persons I usually walk with talk of as coarse and disgusting, but which are interesting at least, if not delightful, to me, because they remind me most strongly of those of our own native dialect. At first, indeed, the only resemblance I was sensible to, lay in the general music and rythm of their speech; but, by dint of listening attentively on all occasions, I soon began to pick up a few of their words, and am now able, I flatter myself, to understand a great part of their discourse. With a few varieties in the inflections, and some more striking variations in the vowel sounds, the Gaelic is evidently in the same language with our own. I do not mean merely, that it is sprung remotely from the same Celtic stem; but that it is entirely of the same structure in all essential respects, and bears, so far as I can judge, a much nearer resemblance to our tongue, than is any where else to be traced between the languages of people that have lived so long asunder. I shall pay particular attention to this subject during my stay in Scotland, and doubt not I shall be

able to give you some very interesting details when we meet. In the mean time, I have already begun to read a little of the Gaelic Ossian, not, you may believe out of any reverence for its authenticity, but with a view to see what the written Gaelic is. Nothing can be more evident than its total inferiority to the Welsh. It is vastly inferior in perspicuity, and immeasurably inferior in melody; in short, it bears no marks of having undergone, as our language has done, the correcting, condensing, and polishing labour of a set of great poets and historians. These defects are still more apparent in a collection of Gaelic songs which I have seen, and which I believe to be really antique. The wild and empassioned tone of sentiment, however, and the cold melancholy imagery of these compositions render them well worthy of being translated; and, indeed, Walter Scott has already done this service for some of the best of them. But I have seen nothing that should entitle them to share any thing like the high and devout admiration which we justly give, and which all Europe would give, had they the opportunity, to the sublime and pathetic masterpieces of our own great bards. I trust, David, you are not neglecting your truly grand and important undertaking. Go on, and prosper; and I doubt not, you will confer the highest honour both on your country and yourself.*

The cadies, from whom I have made this digression, have furnished me with another, and almost as interesting field of study, in quite a different way. Their physiognomies are to me an inexhaustable fund of observation and entertainment. They are for the most part, as I have said, Highlanders by birth, but the experience of their Lowland lives has had the merit of tempering, in a very wonderful manner, the mere mountaineer parts of their aspect. A kind of wild stare, which the eyes retain from the keen and bracing atmosphere of their native glens, is softened with an infusion of quiet ur-

* This refers to a great work on Welsh Poetry and History, in which Mr. Williams has been engaged for some years, and which, when it is published, will, I doubt not, create a greater sensation in Wales, than any thing that has occurred since the death of Llewellyn.

bane shrewdness, often productive of a most diverting inconsistency in the general effect of their countenances. I should certainly have supposed them, *prima facie*, to be the most unprincipled set of men in the world; but I am told their character for honesty, fidelity, and discretion, is such as to justify the most implicit reliance in them. This, however, I by no means take as a complete proof of my being in the wrong. Honesty, fidelity, and discretion, are necessary to their employment, and success; and therefore I doubt not they are honest, faithful, and discreet, in all their dealings with their employers. But I think it is not possible for fellows with such faces as these, to have any idea of moral obligation, beyond what is inspired in this way by the immediate feeling of self-interest; and I have no doubt, that with proper management, one might find on occasion an assassin, almost as easily as a pimp, among such a crew of grinning, smiling, cringing savages, as are at this moment assembled beneath my window. I am making a collection of drawings of all the most noted of these cadies, and I assure you, my sketch-book does not contain a richer section than this will afford. You will be quite thunderstruck to find what uniformity prevails in the development of some of the leading organs of these topping cadies. They are almost all remarkable for projection of their eye-brows—the consequence of the luxuriant manner in which their organs of observation have expanded themselves. At the top of their heads, the symbols of ambition, and love of praise, are singularly prominent. A kind of dogged pertinacity of character may be inferred from the knotty structure of the region behind their ears; and the choleric temperament betrayed in their gestures, when among themselves, may propably be accounted for by the extraordinary development of the organ of self-love, just above the nape of the neck—which circumstance again is, no doubt, somewhat connected with the continual friction of burthens upon that delicate region.

It is very ungrateful of me, however, to be saying any thing disrespectful about a class of men, from whom I have

derived so much advantage since my arrival in this place. Whenever a stranger does arrive, it is the custom that he enters into a kind of tacit compact with some of the body, who is to perform all little offices he may require during the continuance of his visit. I, myself, was particularly fortunate in falling into the hands of one whom I should take to be the cleverest cadie that at present treads the streets of Auld Reekie.

His name is D——d M'N——, and, if one may take his word for it, he has gentle blood in his veins, being no less than "a bairn o' our chief himsell." Nor, indeed, do I see any reason to call this account of his pedigree in question, for Donald is broad of back, and stout of limb, and has, I think, not a little of the barbarian kind of pride about the top of his forehead; and I hear, the Phylarchus with whom he claims kindred, led, in more respects than one, a very patriarchal sort of life.

* * * * *

* * * * *

P. M.

LETTER XXI.

TO THE REV. DAVID WILLIAMS.

* * * * *

I SPENT an afternoon very pleasantly the other day at Dr. B——'s, the same who is so celebrated for his discoveries concerning light—his many inventions of optical instruments—and his masterly conduct of that best of all works of the kind, the Edinburgh Encyclopedia. Dr. —— is still a young man, although one would scarcely suppose this to be

the case, who, never having seen him, should form his guess from considering what he has done. He cannot, I should think, be above forty, if so much. Like most of the scientific men in Edinburgh, the doctor is quite a man of the world in his manners; his countenance is a very mild and agreeable one, and in his eyes, in particular, there is a wonderful union of penetration and tenderness of expression. From his conversation, one would scarcely suspect that he had gone so deep into the hidden parts of science, for he displays a vast deal of information concerning the lighter kinds of literature, although, indeed, he does all this with a hesitative sort of manner, which probably belongs to him as a man of abstruse science. It is, no doubt, mainly owing to this happy combination of accomplishments, that he has been able to render his great work so much more truly of an Encyclopædic character, than any other which has been published under the same name in our island. In a work of that kind, which cannot be finished without the co-operation of a vast variety of contributors continued throughout many successive years, it is quite obvious how much must depend on the superintending and arranging skill and judgment of the editor. Now, it is a very rare thing indeed, to meet with a person of fine talents, who is alike a man of science, and a man of literature; and unless under the care of such a person, I do not see how an Encyclopædia can be conducted in such a way as to give equal satisfaction to both the great classes into which readers of Encyclopædias must necessarily be divided. All the other Encyclopædias published in this country, have been edited either by persons possessed of skill in one department only, and negligent of the rest, or, what is still worse, by persons alike destitute of skill in all departments whatever—in other words, members of the great corporation of charlatans.

There were several very pleasant men of the party, and the conversation, both during dinner, and afterwards, was extremely lively and agreeable, as well as instructive; but from the time we sat down, there was one face which attracted my

attention in a way that I was quite at a loss to account for. I experienced, in looking at it, a strange and somewhat uncomfortable sort of feeling—of which you must often have been sensible—as if I had seen the countenance before, where, when, or how, it was impossible for me to recollect. At last, the gentleman who thus occupied my attention, happened, in talking to Dr. B——, to utter the word *Freyberg*, and the whole affair flashed across me as swift as lightning. That single sound had opened a key to the whole mystery, and a moment after, I could not help wondering how I should have been at a loss. Some years ago, (I shall not say how many,) when I was stronger, and more active than I now am, and capable of making longer excursions in ruder vehicles than I now venture upon in my shandrydan, I remember to have travelled in the common post-wagon from Dresden to Leipsig. I had gone on horseback quite through the Hartz, and passed from thence in the same manner all up the delightful banks of the Elbe, from Magdeburg to the Saxon Switzerland. I then sold my horse, (much the worse for the wear I had given him,) and was making the best of my way toward the west, in that most coarse, and most jumbling of all machines,

"The neat post-wagon trotting in."

We had got as far as within a single stage of Leipsig, when a little adventure befel us, which, till this face recalled it, I had, for years, as utterly forgotten as if it never had occurred. We were just about to enter a village, (I cannot recollect its name,) when our vehicle was surrounded by a party of mounted gens-d'armes, and a fierce-looking fellow, thrusting his mustachio and his pipe into the window, commanded the whole party to come out and show ourselves. A terrible murder, he said, had been committed somewhere by a Jew—a watchman, I think, of Kœningsberg, and he had every occasion to believe, that the murderer had left Dresden that morning in one of the post-wagons. After we had all complied with his order, and dislodged ourselves from the pillar

of tobacco smoke in which we sat enveloped, there were two of the company on whom our keeper seemed to look with eyes of peculiar suspicion. I myself was one, and the other was a thin, dark-complexioned, and melancholy looking young man, whom, till this moment, I had not remarked; for of the six benches swung across the wagon, I had sate upon the one nearest the front, and he on that nearest the rear. I had allowed my beard to grow upon my upper lip, and I believe looked as swarthy as any Jew ever did; but my scanty allowance of nose would have alone satisfied a more skilful physiognomist, that I could not be the guilty man. The other had somewhat the same cast in that feature, and he wore no mustachio, but his hair seemed to be of the genuine Israelitish jet—and the gens-d'armes were positive that one or other of us must be the murderer. I spoke German with fluency, and with a pretty just accent, and made a statement for myself, which seemed to remove something of the suspicion from me. The other delivered himself with more hesitation, and with an accent, which, whatever it might be, was evidently not Saxon, and therefore the Hussar seemed to take it for granted that it was Jewish, imperfectly concealed. At last, after a good deal of discussion, we were both taken to the Amt-house, where the magistrate of the village sat in readiness to decide on the merits of our case. The circumstances which had determined the chief suspicion of the officers, appeared to weigh in the same manner on the mind of the magistrate, and, at the end of the examination which ensued of our persons and our papers, it was announced, that I might proceed on my journey, but that the other must be contented to remain where he was, till his passport should be sent back to Dresden for the examination of the police. Upon this, my fellow-traveller lost temper, and began to complain most bitterly of the inconvenience to which such a delay would expose him. He was on his way, he said, to Freyberg, where he had already studied one year under the celebrated Werner, as his passport testified, and he had particular reasons for being anxious to reach his university before a certain day in the

following week. The magistrate, who was a very mild looking person, seemed to consider with himself for a moment, and then said, "A thought strikes me—the son of our clergyman has studied at Freyberg, and if you have really been there, sir, it is probable he may recognize you." My companion had no objections to an experiment, which at least could not place him in a worse situation than that in which he was—and in a few minutes the son of the clergyman made his appearance. I remember as distinctly as if the thing had occurred only yesterday, the expression of delight which illuminated the countenance of the accused, when this person declared that he recollected him perfectly at Freyberg, and that he had heard Professor Werner speak of him as a young Scotchman who gave infinite promise of being distinguished in the study of mineralogy. This removed every difficulty, and the magistrate, with many apologies, gave us permission to take our seats in the post-wagon. The distance of our positions in the vehicle rendered it impossible for me to exchange more than a very few words with my fellow-sufferer, after we began to move, although, having discovered him to be my countryman, I was sufficiently inclined to enter into conversation. It was late at night before we arrived at Leipsig; and, as I remained there for a day or two, while he passed on, without stopping, to Freyberg, we had no further opportunity of communication. In short, I had never seen the face from that time till now; but I felt assured, that, in spite of the years which had intervened, I could not be mistaken, and here was the very gentleman at the table of Dr. B——.

In the course of a few minutes, I heard him addressed by the name of J——, and immediately conjectured that he might probably be the well-known Professor of Natural History, whose System of Mineralogy you have often seen on my table. This turned out to be the case; and, after a second bottle had somewhat diminished our ceremony, I had a pleasure in recalling to him the story of the murderous Jew, and so of commencing (for it could scarcely be called renewing) an acquaintance with one from whose works I had

received so much information and advantage. After the Doctor's company dispersed themselves, I walked along Prince's-Street with Professor J——, and he invited me to call on him next day, and see his museum—an invitation which you, who know my propensities, will not suspect me of declining. He also offered to show me the collection of mineralogy belonging to the University, of which I had heard a great deal. I went yesterday, and it is, undoubtedly, a very superb collection. It is of great value, and admirably arranged; and the external characters of minerals, particularly those derived from colours, are finely illustrated by an extensive series of the most valuable specimens, arranged according to the system made use of by Werner.

Professor J—— is chiefly known to the world as a mineralogist, and in this character he certainly stands entirely without a rival in his own country; and when we consider that his system of mineralogy has been adopted by a celebrated Frenchman, as the text-book to his own lectures in Paris, we may fairly conclude, from the preference shown by so competent a judge, that the knowledge and ability displayed in that work, render it at least equal to the most approved publications of the continental authors. But it is not his intimate acquaintance with mineralogy alone, which renders Mr. J—— so capable of doing honour to the chair which he holds. He is also greatly versed in zoology, and, what is of great importance in these times, seems much inclined to indulge in those more general and philosophical views of that science, which the study of nomenclature and classification has well-nigh banished from the remembrance of most of his brethren in the south. A residence of many years in different parts of the continent, and, in particular, a perfect knowledge of the German tongue, which he acquired during his stay at Freyberg, have opened to him many sources of information, from which he continues to derive infinite advantage; and, at a time when, from the extent and multiplicity of his labours in mineralogy, one might naturally suppose his attention to be entirely engrossed by that

study, his pupils, I am assured, find him on every occasion both able and willing to instruct them regarding all the recent and most important discoveries and improvements in the other branches of natural science.

The professor delivers his lectures both during the winter and summer season, and he divides his course into five great branches: Meteorology, Hydrography, Mineralogy, a Sketch of the Philosophy of Botany, sufficient to enable his pupils to understand the relations which subsist between that science and a complete history of the inorganic parts of the globe—and, lastly, Zoology. The first of these divisions is rendered particularly interesting, by the number and variety of curious facts which are collected, and the more so, as there are scarcely any good books written professedly on the subject. In truth, I should think the whole science of Natural History, as a popular branch of education, is likely to assume a new aspect under the auspices of this ingenious and indefatigable man. Now, that all the known facts of Mineralogy are to him "familiar as household words," he will have it in his power to devote more of his attention to the various branches of Zoology, which hitherto, as he says very candidly, he has not had either leisure or opportunity to discuss and illustrate, as his inclinations would lead him to do. The same acuteness which has enabled him so completely to overcome all the difficulties of his own favourite department, will ere long, I doubt not, elevate him to the first rank among the zoologists of Britain; and he will soon have the honourable satisfaction of instituting a school of Natural History in the northern metropolis, which may long remain unrivalled in any other country. This desirable object, I am happy to learn, he is now likely to accomplish more easily and speedily than he could before have expected, by means of a most valuable and interesting acquisition, which is about to be obtained by the University. The fine cabinet of M. Dufresne of the Jardin des Plantes, so well known and deservedly admired by all the Parisian sçavants, has just been purchased for the public Museum. This, with certain additions to be

procured at the approaching sale of Mr. Bullock's extensive collections, when combined with the great treasures which the University already possesses, will certainly form by far the most magnificent Museum of Natural History in Britain.

Such is the general view I have been able to form of the actual state of the science, under this celebrated professor. From various conversations, however, with him, Dr. B——, and some of the young gentlemen who attend the professor's lectures, I am sorry to hear, that, on the whole, the science of Natural History neither has been, nor is, cultivated throughout Scotland, with any degree of zeal corresponding to the opportunity which the country affords. Its natural advantages are far superior, in most respects, to those of the sister kingdom; and the situation of Edinburgh, in particular, may be justly regarded as more favourable than any in the island for the pursuit of this delightful study. Indeed, it would not be easy to determine, why a higher state of advancement has not been attained; and the difficulty is much increased when we consider, that, in addition to the great facility which this most picturesque district affords for the practical pursuit of the science, the Professorship of Natural History has already been held for several years by the assiduous and intelligent gentleman, of whom I have spoken so much.

I am inclined to attribute this to the joint operation of a great number of causes; but I observe, that Professor J—— himself considers the too engrossing influence of the law as being the most immediate and effectual of all the dampers under which his favourite study has so long languished. Most of the young men of this city are trained up either as barristers or attorneys; and it very unfortunately happens, that all more liberal pursuits, (both classical and scientific,) so far from being much respected or held in estimation by these classes of men, are, for the most part, regarded as quite inconsistent with a diligent discharge of their professional duties and functions. Professor J—— informs me, that three-fourths of the students who attend his lectures, are strangers

and students of medicine, chiefly English. Those of the last mentioned faculty, who are indigenous to Scotland, have, till very lately at least, either procured appointments in regiments stationed in foreign quarters, or retired to distant corners of the country, where the entire absence of books, and the laborious and unsettled life enjoyed, or rather endured, by rural practitioners, have been more than sufficient to extinguish every spark of science, which might have been kindled in their bosoms during their attendance at the University. And thus, though very great and increasing benefits are derived by the students of this science in Edinburgh, from the zeal and talents of Professor J——, and other causes, it would seem that the science must, for a considerable time, look for its best fruits in the south. I rejoice to find that the English students who resort to this place, are duly impressed with a sense of the advantages which they enjoy.

I dined with Professor J—— yesterday, with a small party of his most distinguished pupils. Among these there was one whom the professor particular introduced me to—a Mr. James W——n, brother to the poet. This young gentleman follows the profession of a writer to the Signet, (which, as I have told you, is the name for the highest class of attornies in Edinburgh,) but forms, as Mr. J—— assured me, a brilliant exception to the neglect with which matters of science are commonly treated by the members of the profession. He is very young—many years junior to his more celebrated brother, and no casual observer would suspect them to be of the same family. I have already described to you the exterior of the poet; James is a thin, pale, slender, contemplative-looking person, with hair of rather a dark colour, and extremely short-sighted. In his manners also, he is as different as possible from his brother; his voice is low, and his whole demeanour as still as can be imagined. In conversation he attempts no kind of display; but seems to possess a very peculiar vein of dry humour, which renders him extremely diverting. Notwithstanding all these differences, however, I could easily trace a great similarity in the construction of the bones of their two

faces; and, indeed, there is nothing more easy to imagine, than that, with much of the same original powers and propensities, some casual enough circumstances may have been sufficient to decide, that the one of the brothers should be a poet, and the other a naturalist. The parts of the science of which Mr. James W——n is fondest, are Ornithology and Entomology—studies so delightful to every true lover of nature, that, I suspect, they are, in some measure, practically familiar to every poet who excels in depicting the manifestations, and in tracing the spirit of beauty in the external universe. Professor J——, indeed, informed me, that his young friend is, in truth, no less a poet than a naturalist—that he possesses a fine genius for versification, and has already published several little pieces of exquisite beauty, although he has not ventured to give his name along with them.

On leaving the professor's, Mr. W——n and I adjourned to this house, (where, by the way, Mr. Oman enjoys very little of my company,) and had a quiet bowl of punch together, and a great deal of conversation respecting subjects connected with the science in which he so greatly excels, and for which I myself, albeit nothing of an adept, have long entertained a special partiality. Among other topics, the brumal retreat of the swallow was handled at considerable length. Mr. W——n I find rather inclined to that theory, which would represent Africa as the principal winter-depot of at least several of the species—the Hirundo, Apus, and Rustica, in particular; and he adduced, in confirmation of this, a passage from Herodotus, which I had never before heard pointed out with a view to this subject—according to which, one kind of swallow (from the description, he seemed to suppose it must be the Swift,) remains *in Egypt throughout the whole year*—δι' ετεος εοντες ουκ απολειπουσι. I have never, indeed, met with any man who seemed to possess a greater power of illustrating subjects of natural history, by quotations from writers of all kinds, and in particular from the poets. Milton and Wordsworth, above all, he appears to have completely by heart; and it was wonderfully delightful

to me to hear matters, which are commonly discussed in the driest of all possible methods, treated of in so graceful a manner by one who is so much skilled in them. Nothing could be more refreshing than to hear some minute details about birds and insects, interrupted and illuminated by a fragment of grand melancholy music from the Paradise Lost, or the Excursion.

I shall have occasion to say a great deal more to you, both about Professor J—— and his young friend.

Meantime, believe me ever

Most affectionately your's,

P. M.

LETTER XXII.

TO THE REV. DAVID WILLIAMS.

DEAR DAVID,

I BELIEVE I have already hinted to you, that the students in this University are very fond of Debating Societies, and, indeed, the nature of their favourite studies might prepare one abundantly to find it so. They inhale the very atmosphere of doubt, and it is in the course of nature that they should exhale the very breath of disputation. They are always either actually struggling, *vi et armis*, to get over some quagmire or another, or, after establishing themselves once more on what they conceive to be a portion of the Terra Firma, falling out among themselves, which of the troop had picked his way along the neatest set of stepping-stones, or made his leap from the firmest knot of rushes. Before they have settled this mighty quarrel, it is possible they may begin to feel the ground giving way beneath their feet, and are all equally reduced once again to hop, stride, and scramble, as they best may for themselves.

The first of the institutions, however, which I visited, is supposed to be frequented by persons who have already some-

what allayed their early fervour for disputation, by two or three years' attendance upon Debating Societies, of an inferior and of a far more ephemeral character. While he attends the prælections of the Professor of Logic, the student aspires to distinguish himself in a club, constituted chiefly or entirely of members of that class. The students of Ethics and of Physics are, in like manner, provided with separate rooms, in which they canvass at night the doctrines they have heard promulgated in the lecture of the morning. It is not till all this apprenticeship of discipline has been regularly gone through, that the juvenile philosopher ventures to draw up a petition, addressed to the president and members of the Speculative Society of Edinburgh, which humbly showeth forth, that he would fain be permitted to give to his polemical and oratorial faculties the last finish of sharpness and elegance, under the high auspices of their venerable body.

Without sending in such a petition as this, and being admitted formally a member of the society, it is not possible to be present at one of their meetings. These sages will scarcely allow a poor passing stranger to catch even one sidelong odour of their wisdom. No—it is necessary to assume the regular garb of the initiated, before these Hierophants will expand the gates of their Adytus, and reveal to you the inspiring glories of their mysteries. Although I could not help feeling some qualmish suspicions, that this arrangement might, in part at least, have been dictated by a due reverence for the old maxim, *omne ignotum pro magnifico*, yet the way in which I heard the society spoken of, by persons for whose opinion I could not but entertain a high respect, and the curiosity which I certainly felt, to witness for myself all possible manifestation of the rising genius of Scotland, were enough to counterbalance any little scruples I might have, and I resolved, since less might not avail, to affix the name of Peter Morris, M. D. to the regular formula of supplication. It was attested by Mr. ——, who is an honorary member of the society, and by his nephew, a young man of considerable promise, that the said Peter Morris, M. D. was, in their judgment,

possessed of such a measure of learning and ability, as might justify the society in admitting him into their bosom; and after the usual ceremonies of doubt, delay, examination, and panegyric, the said Peter was ballotted for and admitted as aforesaid. I rather grudged a fee of three guineas, which, I was given to understand, formed an essential preliminary to my taking my seat; but, however, as I had been pretty fortunate at loo the evening before, I did not allow this to form any lasting impediment to my honours. As the poet sings—

> "I prize not treasure for itself,
> But what it can procure;
> Go hang, said I, the paltry pelf
> Would keep the spirit poor."

So I paid my three guineas, and prepared to make my appearance next Tuesday evening.

For the sake of being near the scene of action, I agreed to the proposal of the gentlemen who had recommended me to the society, viz. to having a snug dinner with one or two friends in addition, in a tavern immediately adjoining. The name of the house is the Lord Nelson, and it is kept by an Englishman, one Barclay. We went at half past four, in order that we might have time to drink our bottle comfortably before the meeting; and I assure you, I have very seldom enjoyed either a better dinner or a better bottle. There is an ordinary in the house every day at that very hour, which is attended, as I was informed, by a considerable number of students, besides a host of bagmen, and other travellers of all descriptions, and many half-pay officers of the naval, military, and, above all, of the medical establishments. We had a glimpse of them and their dinner, *en passant*, and I promise you both made a very joyous appearance. As for us, we dined apart in a room of very magnificent proportions, which, of old, it seems, had been the dining-room of a celebrated President of the Court of Session; a lofty hall, with a rich ceiling in the French style of stucco work, and decorated at one extremity with a huge portrait of the Hero

whose name the tavern bears—evidently a genuine production of the sign-post school. The princely size of the room, however, and elevation of the roof, were sufficient to give the whole affair an air of gentility, and even of splendour, such as is not often to be met with in a house of this description. I don't know whether your comfort is so much affected by accessaries of this sort as mine are; but I do at all times enjoy a dinner tenfold, when it is served up in a room of airy and stately dimensions. The fare in itself was very excellent. We had a dish of Mullicatawny, and some cod's-head and shrimp-sauce—superior corned beef, and a boiled turkey—a haricot—a pigeon-pie and macaroni—all for half-a-crown a-head, being only a sixpence more than the charge at the ordinary. But to me, the greatest luxury was some very fine draught-porter, the first I have met with since I came to Scotland, for the people of this place in general drink all their malt-liquor bottled—but the landlord of the Nelson is an Englishman, and knows better. After finishing a bottle of Madeira, we had some very fair Port, which we chose to drink mulled, being assured that Mrs. Barclay piques herself upon her scientific use of spices in that kind of preparation. The skill of our hostess gave us entire satisfaction, and we kept her at work pretty closely till seven o'clock. Being so very agreeably seated and entertained, I could scarcely think of removing at so very extraordinary an hour, and dropped a modest hint that the Speculative might be advantageously deferred till another opportunity; but my objections were over-ruled by my companions. I insisted, however, that we should, at least, come back after the debate, to enjoy an epilogue in the same taste with our prologue,—an idea which appeared to meet the wishes of the company, and was indeed agreed to *per acclamationem.*

The Speculative Society is the only institution of the kind, whose existence is acknowledged in a formal manner by the University. It forms a part of the system, and, as such, is provided with chambers within the College—advantages which are, no doubt, owing to the high reputation the Soci-

ety has at particular times enjoyed. At the present time, as it happens, the alterations and improvements which are going on within the University buildings, have dislodged the Society from their old chambers, and the new and more splendid accommodations designed for them, are not quite in readiness for their reception. Their temporary place of meeting is in the hall of the Theological Professor—a low-roofed, dark, mean-looking place, surrounded with shelves groaning under Dutch and Puritanical Divinity; and here it was that I had the honour of being introduced to them.

Right opposite to the door at which we entered, in a huge elbow-chair, or rather pulpit—from which the Professor of Divinity is, no doubt, accustomed to expound the mysteries of Calvinism,—and, with an air of grave dignity, which any professor might be happy to equal, sate a pale snub-nosed young gentleman, with a hammer in his hand, the President (*prima facie*) of the Speculative Society. His eyes half-shut, as if to exclude the distracting dazzle of the tallow candles that blazed close before him; his right hand on his hammer, and his left supporting with two of its fingers the weight of meditation lodged within his forehead; his lips compressed with the firmness of conscious authority, and his whole attitude, as it were, instinct with the very spirit of his station, completed a picture, which, I should suppose, might have produced no trifling effect on the nerves of an intrant more juvenile than myself. Even on me, the "*Vultus sedentis tyranni*" was not entirely lost; and I confess I was glad when I found that I had fairly seated myself in a dark and remote corner of the room, without attracting any of his attention.

Immediately under this imposing figure might be descried the less awful, but no less important face and figure of the secretary, who was employed at this moment in calling over the names of the members, according to their position in the muster-roll of the Society. Around a green table, at the head of which Mr. Secretary was placed, a few of the more grave and dignified-looking members were accommodated

with cane-backed chairs; while, on either side, the *humilior caterva* occupied some rows of narrow wooden benches, which rise one above another out of the area of the apartment. All together there was an appearance of expectation and preparation, both in their arrangement and in their countenances, which could not fail to excite a considerable degree of attention and respect.

In general, they seemed to be very young men, the majority of them, I dare say, not above twenty; but here and there might be seen a few persons of somewhat maturer age in the midst of them. These, as Mr. —— informed me, are, for the most part, incipient advocates—willing, I presume, to exercise their lungs here, because they have less opportunity than they could wish of exercising them elsewhere—and not, peradventure, without hope, that the fame acquired and sustained by them among their brethren of the Speculative, may tend to procure them readier access to a more lucrative species of reputation elsewhere. I thought I could see in some of the faces of these gentlemen, an air of peculiar suavity and graciousness, as if they were willing to have something of the credit of condescension to keep them in countenance with themselves and their neighbours. One gentleman much older than any of these, occupied a place close by the table, with a mild and paternal look of protection. On asking Mr. —— who this was, I learned that Mr. W—— (for that is his name) had long been treasurer of the Society, and had, in the course of his life, conferred upon its members, both in their individual and corporate capacity, so many important favours, that it is no wonder he should have formed a warm attachment to all their interests, and should take a sincere pleasure in coming regularly to be a witness of their exertions. It is easy to imagine the impression, which long custom, and the consciousness of having done good, may have been sufficient to make upon a person of benevolent dispositions, such, as I am informed, are those of Mr. W——.

By and by, the catalogue being finished, and some minor

ceremonies duly performed, one of the young gentlemen stepped from his place, and ascending to a small tribune on the left hand of the President, began to read aloud from a MS. which he held in his hand. It is the custom, it seems, that the business of the society is always opened by an essay from one of the members, and the person whose turn it was to minister in this way to their edification, had already announced, as the title of his discourse—"A few Considerations on the Policy of the Corn-Bill." I listened for some minutes to what he said; but soon perceived, that the whole of his merits amounted to nothing more than having translated from bad into worse English, a treatise on the same subject in the Edinburgh Review; so I amused myself during the rest of the performance with some hearty sighs, for having so easily been induced to distrust my own inclinations, and quit Mrs. Barclay for the Speculative.

After the essayist had brought his labours to a close, the President opened his eyes, (which as yet he had never found leisure to do,) and began to ask the members, if they had any remarks to offer in regard to the performance they had heard. A pause of several minutes ensued—during which the funereal silence of expectation was only disturbed by a few faint hems from those who intended to be most critical on the occasion, and the rustling of the leaves of the MS., which the author was restoring to his pocket, with a look that spoke as plain as look could speak it—"Jamque opus exegi!" At last, one of the gentlemen I have mentioned, stood up in his place, and observed, that "considering it as a very improper thing, that an essay of so much brilliancy should be allowed to pass unnoticed, he could not help rising to express his astonishment at the delay which had just occurred. The essay," he said, "displayed every quality which could render an essay honourable to its writer, and agreeable to the society. Its matter was not, indeed, new; but in its arrangement, a very extraordinary degree of skill had certainly been exemplified. The language he could not help considering as still more worthy of admiration—it was simple, concise, and elegant,

where matters of detail were treated of; but rose to a pitch of splendour and majesty in the more impassioned parts of the subject, such as he could not say he had often met with in any authors of our age. On the whole, when he reflected on the weight and importance of the subject, and the difficulty of treating such a subject in a way at once popular and scientific, he could not help saying, he looked upon the essay which the honourable gentleman had just delivered, as one of the most wonderful productions to which, in his long—his very long experience, even the Speculative Society of Edinburgh had ever had the honour of giving birth. (*Hear! hear!*) He begged to sit down with returning his warmest acknowledgments to the honourable essayist, for the instruction and delight which his genius had afforded to himself individually, and had no doubt the society would concur in the propriety of expressing similar sentiments, in a way more consistent with their dignity, and more gratifying to the honourable essayist, through the mouth of his honourable friend—their President." (*Hear! hear!*)

The applauses with which the termination of this address was greeted, yielded in a few seconds to the sharp, shrill, discordant accents of a stout young man, who had started up with an air of much vehemence, from a very ærial and distant part of the room, and descended into the centre of the assembly. "Mr. President," (said he—for the energy of his style would be lost, were I to make use of the third person,) —"Mr. President, I rise under such a mixture of feelings, as at no former period of my life ever agitated, overwhelmed, confounded, oppressed, and disturbed this struggling bosom. Mr. President, I rise, I say, under the pressure and influence —under the weight, burden, and impending imperativeness of a host of feelings, in which, notwithstanding all their respect for the honourable and learned member who has just sat down, I am confident, and proudly confident, the great majority, the great and enlightened majority of this great and enlightened society, will have no difficulty in expressing their entire, and hearty, and cordial concurrence. Mr. President,

I rise, in a word, to give vent to the conflicting tumults which, at this moment, are displaying all their might in rending asunder the repose of a mind, which, whatever in other respects it may be entitled to, will be acknowledged, by all the members who hear me, to have at no period displayed any measure of lukewarmness, coldness, or indifference, to the high, enduring, and important interests of the Speculative Society of Edinburgh. (*Hear! hear!*) Mr. President, I have been for seven years a member—I hope you will bear me witness, a faithful, diligent, and attentive member (more, my humble natural faculties will not permit me to be,) of the Speculative Society of Edinburgh. (*Hear! hear!*) Mr. President, on my legs as I now am, in the presence of this society, a body, for whom, so long as life stirs within my bosom, or consciousness within my brain, I shall always retain the warmest, and most affectionate, and most filial, and most fraternal admiration, gratitude, and respect—(*Hear! hear!—Bravo!—hear! hear!*) Mr. President, on my legs as I now feel myself to be," (by the way, the orator stood only upon one of them, and kept the other extended behind him, as if to assist the effect of his manual gesticulations)—" Mr. President, it is absolutely impossible that I should refrain from expressing my feeling of pain, horror, contempt, disgust, and indignation, that the Speculative Society of Edinburgh should ever have been subjected to listen to such an essay as has just been delivered, from any of its members. Mr. President, the essay which you have just heard, possesses no one iota of such merit as an essay delivered in the Speculative Society of Edinburgh ought to possess—meagre in matter, cold in conception, impotent in illustration, false in facts, absurd in argument, and barren in basis, it would scarcely have been better than it is, though it had wanted its supernumerary sins, and blazing blemishes, of dark diction, farragoed phraseology, lame language, and offensive figurativeness. (*Hear! hear!*) Mr. President, I shall not stop at present to enlarge upon defects, which my mind tells me have excited the same sensations in almost every bosom that beats around this table. Mr. President, I

shall not waste breath in the vain endeavour to express an indignation, which is too big for utterance, too full for words. I shall sit down, with proposing, that the gentleman who delivered this essay receive from the chair a warning to consider better with himself before he again presumes to insult the Speculative Society of Edinburgh, with the crude and hasty suggestions of a mind, that, I am sorry to say, does not seem to be filled with proper ideas concerning the nature, the objects, and the duties of the Speculative Society of Edinburgh." (*Hear! hear! hear!*)

A small creaking voice arose from the right side of the President, on the conclusion of this harangue, and its proprietor proceeded in a tone of quiet, feeble, and querulous hesitation, (which afforded an irresistibly ludicrous contrast to the manner of his fiery and foaming predecessor,) to "reprobate the idea of the warmth—the unnecessary—the improper—and, he must add, the disagreeable warmth, with which his honourable and learned friend, who had just sat down, had expressed himself. The merits of an essay, such as his honourable and learned friend on the opposite side of the house had this evening delivered, were not to be annihilated by such an effusion of invective as that which his honourable and learned friend in his eye had thought proper to make use of. The essay of his honourable friend had probably been produced at the expense of very great labour and exertion of body and mind. The midnight oil had been wasted in the composition of his honourable friend's essay. His honourable friend had, to his certain knowledge, absented himself from all parties of pleasure to which he had been invited during the greater part of this spring, in order to collect materials, and facts, and illustrations, for the essay, which they had that night heard from his friend. The honourable gentleman in his eye should have recollected, that it is not to be expected that every member of this society should possess the same rapidity of genius as he (the gentleman in his eye) possessed. He should have considered, that the question of the corn bill is one attended with infinite difficulty in all its

branches; that it is necessary, in order to write an essay on this subject, to undergo the fatigue of examining into a vast variety of documents and treatises, and to study what all the great authors on political economy, from Adam Smith downwards, have written concerning the nature of the sources of national wealth and prosperity, and to decide among the conflicting opinions of a vast variety of the most eminent persons who were at this moment occupied with the study of the whole question, both within and without the pale of the Speculative Society of Edinburgh. For himself, he had not come to this house with the view of merely criticising the production of his honourable and learned friend, the Essayist, but rather of laying before the society the results of his own investigations on the same highly interesting topic; and the first of these results, to which he begged to call the attention of the house, was a view of the effects which were produced on Hamburgh, by the occupation of that port and city by Marshal Davoust. It would be found, that no subject could be attended with greater difficulties than that now upon the table of the society; they ought to enter upon the inquiry with all the calmness which subjects of that imperative interest demand; and he must say, that he expected, after they should have gone over the thirteen heads of argument which he had marked out for the subject of his present address, he expected the society would come to the conclusion, that the question of the corn-bill was one, which at least required to be studied before it could be expected to be solved.

"The first topic to which I shall call the notice of this house," said he, "is that of the true nature of corn—corn, Mr. President—

* * * * * * *

corn—is not to be regarded," &c. &c. &c.—But I think it would be rather too much, were I to trouble you with the rest of the silly, confused, unintelligible string of hackneyed facts, and hackneyed conclusions, with which this young gentle-

man troubled his audience for at least an hour and a half.—At the end of that period, one half of the company were fast asleep; the rest yawning and fidgetting, and now and then shuffling with their feet. No hints, however, could produce the least effect on the unwearied indefatigable listlessness of their apathetic orator. Whole pages from the Parliamentary Debates, mixed up with whole pages from Malthus, and these again intermingled with endless trite disquisitions, stolen from Reviews, Magazines, and Weekly Papers—the whole mighty mass of dullness intermingled, with not one ray either of novelty or ingenuity—power or elegance—the dose proved too much even for my iron nerves. My uneasiness was such, that at last I fairly lost temper, and seizing my hat, escaped, as best I might, from the Speculative Society of Edinburgh. My companions on each side of me had been asleep for an hour, but my removal awakened them; and, after rubbing their eyes, and looking round them for a moment, they both had the good sense to follow my example.

On looking at my watch, I found it was eleven o'clock, and I could not help reproaching myself a good deal for the time I had been wasting. The transition from this scene of solemn and stupid drivelling, to the warm fire-side of Mrs. Barclay—her broiled haddocks, her scolloped oysters, and her foaming tankards, was one of the most refreshing things I have ever experienced. But I see it is now late; so adieu for the present.

P. M.

LETTER XXIII.

TO THE SAME.

Dear David,

I am extremely delighted to observe how much effect the craniological remarks, so liberally, yet so modestly, distributed over the surface of my correspondence, have been able

to produce upon you. I once thought you had the organ of stubborness and combativeness very luxuriantly brought out, but shall from henceforth be inclined to think I had been mistaken in my observation of your head. My best advice to you in the mean time is, to read daily with diligence, but not with blind credulity, in Dr. Spurzheim's book, which I rejoice to hear you have purchased. Pass your fingers gently around the region of your head, whenever any new idea is suggested to you by his remarks, and I doubt not you will soon be a firm believer, that "there are more things in heaven and earth than we once dreamt of in our philosophy."

The aversion which you say you at first felt for the science is, howevever, a natural, and therefore I cannot help regarding it as a very excusable sort of prejudice. The very names which have been bestowed upon the science—*Craniosoopy* and *Craniology*—to say nothing of the still coarser *Schadellehre* (or skull-doctrine) of its first doctor and professor, are disagreeable terms, on account of their too direct and distinct reference to the bones. They bring at once before the imagination a naked skull, and in persons who have not been trained to the callousness of the dissecting-room, conceptions of a nature so strictly anatomical, can never fail to excite a certain feeling of horror and disgust. I am glad to find that this feeling had been sanctioned by antiquity; for, in some quotations from Athenæus, which fell casually into my hands the other day, it is expressly mentioned, that the Greeks considered it as "improper to speak of the physical substances of the head." I perfectly enter into the spirit of tastefulness and wisdom, which suggested such a maxim to that most intellectual people. Among them the doctrine of pure materialism had not merely been whispered in mystery in the contemplative gardens of Epicurus; it had gone abroad over the surface of the people, and contaminated and debased their spirit. The frail fabric of their superstitious faith presented but too obvious a mark for the shafts of infidel wit, and it was no wonder that they who were wise enough to feel the necessity of guarding this fabric, should have possessed no

very accurate notions concerning the true limits of its bulwarks. In our days, however, there is assuredly no reason for being so very timorous; and I think a philosophical person like you should, *bona fide*, set yourself to get rid of a prejudice which is no longer entitled to be regarded as either a necessary or a convenient one.

It is much to be wished, notwithstanding, that some name could be found far this admirable science, which would give less offence even to those who are rather disposed than otherwise to give it its fair chance of thriving in the world. I have been thinking a great while on this subject, and have balanced in my own mind the merits of more *oscopies* and *ologies*, than I care to trouble you with repeating. *Craniology* itself, over and above the general and natural prejudice I have already talked of, labours under a secondary, an adventitious, and a merely vulgar prejudice, derived from the ignorant and blundering jokes which have been connected with it by the writers of Reviews and Magazines. It is wonderful how long such trifling things retain their influence; but I would hope this noble science is not to be utterly hanged (like a dog,) because an ill name has been given to it. Sometimes, after the essence of a man's opinion has been proved to be false and absurd, even to his own satisfaction, it is necessary, before he can be quite persuaded to give it up, that we should allow a few words to be sacrificed. These are the scape-goats which are tossed relentlessly over the rock, after they are supposed to be sufficiently imbued and burthened with the sins of the blundering intellect that dictated them. And such, I doubt not, will, in the issue, be the fortune of poor, derided, despised, but innocent, although certainly somewhat rude and intractable *Craniology*.—*Cranioscopy*, (particularly since Dr. Roget has undertaken to blacken its reputation in the Supplement to the Encyclopædia Britannica,) may be pretty sure of sharing the same melancholy fate. There is no doubt that Jack and Gill must tumble down the hill in company.

Anthropology pleased me very much for a few days; but

it is certainly too vague. It does not sit close enough to show the true shape and character of that which it would clothe. Cephalology and Cephaloscopy would sound uncouth, and neither of them would much improve the original bargain with which we are quarrelling. Organology shares in something of the same defect with Anthropology. In short, as yet, I have not been able to hit on any thing which exactly pleases on reflection. Although a worse cranioscopist, you are a better linguist than I am; so I beg you to try your hand at the coining of a phrase. A comparatively unconcerned person may perhaps be more fortunate than a zealous lover like myself; for it is not in one respect only that women are like words. In the mean time, when it is necessary to mention any person's brain, it may be best to call it his Organization. It is perhaps impossible altogether to avoid employing expressions of an anatomical cast; but the more these can be avoided, the better chance there will most assuredly be of rendering the science popular. It is one in which the ladies have quite as much interest as we have; and I think every thing should be done, therefore, that may tend to smooth and soften their reception of it. In its essence, it possesses many, very many, points of captivation, which I should think were likely to operate with wonderful success on the imagination of the female sex. The best and the wisest of the sex, with whom I ever conversed in a confidential manner, confessed to me, that the great and constantly besetting plague of women, is their suspicion that they are not permitted to see into the true depths of the character of men. And indeed, when one considers what an overbalancing proportion of the allusions made in any conversation between two men of education, must be entirely unintelligible to almost any woman who might chance to overhear them, it is impossible to wonder that the matter should stand as it does. It is not to be expected, that she should be able to understand the exact relation which the intelligible part of their talk may bear to the unintelligible. She sees a line tossed into a depth, which is to her as black

as night, and how should she be able to guess, how far down may be the measure of its descent?

Now, what a charming thing must it appear in the eyes of one who is habitually tormented in this way, to hear of a science that professes to furnish a key, not indeed to the actual truth of the whole characters of men, but to that of many important parts in their characters? I can conceive of nothing more ecstatic than the transport of some bitter unsatisfied Blue-Stocking, on the first hearing that there is such a science in the world as Craniology. "Ha!" she will say to herself—"we shall now see the bottom of all this mystery. The men will no longer dare to treat us with this condescending sort of concealment. We shall be able to look at their skulls, and tell them a little plain truth, whenever they begin to give themselves airs."

Now, I am for making the science as popular as possible—indeed, I think, if kept to a few, it would be the basest and most cruel kind of monopoly the world ever witnessed—and, therefore, I should like to see my craniological brethren adapt their modes of expression and explanation, as much as possible, to the common prejudices of this great division of disciples. It is well known, what excellent proselyte-makers they are in all respects; and I am decidedly for having all their zeal on our side. One plain and obvious rule, I think, is, that the head should always be talked of and considered in the light of a Form—an object having certain proportions from which certain inferences may be drawn. Besides, in adhering to this rule, we shall only be keeping to the practice of the only great Craniologists the world ever produced—the Greeks. I do not mean to their practice in regard to expressing themselves alone; but to their practice, in gathering and perfecting those ideas concerning this science, which they have expressed in a far more lasting way than words can ever rival. As dissection of human bodies was entirely unknown among the ancients, it is obvious, that their sculptors and painters must have derived all their knowledge from the exterior of the human form. The external aspect of the head

is all that nature exhibits to us, or intends we should see. It is there that expression appears and speaks a natural language to our minds—a language of which our knowledge is vague and imperfect, and almost unconscious; but of which a few simple precepts and remarks are enough to recall to our recollection the great outlines, and to convince me at least, that a very little perseverance might suffice to render us masters of much of the practical detail.

You will smile, perhaps, when you hear me talk in so satisfied a tone about the craniological skill of the Greeks; and yet there is nothing of which I am more thoroughly convinced, than that they did, practically at least, understand infinitely more of the science than any of the disciples of Gall and Spurzheim are likely to rival even a century hence. There is one circumstance—a small one, you will say—which suggested itself to me yesterday, for the first time, when I was sitting after dinner, in a room where several large plaster-of-Paris busts were placed on the extremities of a sideboard. What is called *Grace*, is chiefly to be found in those movements which result from organs on the top of the head. In women, there is more of it than in men, because their animal faculties are smaller. Now, in all paintings of Madonnas, particularly of the *Matres Amabiles*, the attitude evidently results from the faculties in the region above the forehead. The chin is drawn in, and the upper fore-part of the head leans forward. This is not done with a view to represent modesty and humility alone; which, by suspending the action of pride and self-love in the back part of the head, take away what kept it upright. The attitude of humility, therefore, results from a negative cause. But the Madonnas have often a look quite dignified and assured, of unquestioning adorable divine serenity; and the leaning forward of the brow in them, is accompanied with an air which denotes the activity of a positive cause—namely, the principle of love in the upper parts of the forehead. This was suggested to me, however, not by a picture of the Madonna, but by a Grecian bust—and I think you will scarcely suspect which this was.

It was one of which the whole character is, I apprehend, mistaken in modern times—one which is looked at by fine ladies with a shudder—and by fine gentlemen with a sneer. Artists alone study and love it—their eyes are too much trained to permit of any thing else. But even they seem to me entirely to overlook the true *character* of that which, with a view to quite different qualities, they fervently admire. In the Hercules Farnese (for this is the bust) no person who looks on the form and attitude with a truly scientific eye, can possibly believe that he sees only the image of brute strength. There are few heads on the contrary more human in their expression—more eloquent with the manly virtue of a mild and generous hero. And how indeed could a Grecian sculptor have dared to represent the glorious Alcides in any other way?—How do the poets represent him?—As the image of divine strength and confidence, struggling with and vanquishing the evils of humanity—as the emanation of divine benevolence, careless of all, but doing good—purifying the earth from the foulness of polluting monsters—avenging the cause of the just and the unfortunate—plunging into hell in order to restore to an inconsolable husband the pale face of his wife, who had died a sacrifice to save him—himself at last expiring on the hoary summit of Athos, amidst the blaze of a funeral pile which had been built indeed with his own hands, but which he had been compelled to ascend by the malignant cruelty of a disappointed savage. The being who was hallowed with all these high attributes in the strains of Sophocles, Euripides, and Pindar—would any sculptor have dared to select him for the object in which to embody his ideas of the mere animal power of man—the exuberance of corporeal strength? So far from this, the Hercules has not only one of the most intellectual heads that are to be found among the monuments of Greek sculpture, but also one of the most graceful. With the majesty which he inherits from the embrace of Jupiter, there is mingled a mild and tender expression of gentleness, which tells that he has also his share in the blood, and in the miseries of our own lower nature. The

stooping reflective attitude may be that of a hero weary with combat, but is one that speaks, as if his combatting had been in a noble cause—as if high thoughts had nerved his arm more than the mere exultations of corporeal vigour. His head is bent from the same quarter as that of the Madonnas; and whoever takes the trouble to examine it, will find, that in this particular point is to be found the chief expansion and prominence of his organization.

* * * * *

* * * * *

P. M.

LETTER XXIV.

TO THE SAME.

Oman's, Tuesday Evening.

DEAR DAVID,

IN a place where education is so much diffused among the men, it is natural to suppose, that the women also must, in no inconsiderable degree, be imbued with some passion for literature. The kinds of information most in request here, (and, indeed, necessarily so, when we reflect on the means of education which the place affords,) are evidently much more within the reach of the Fair Sex, than in most other cities of the same importance. To be able to talk with fluency about the Politics and Belles Lettres of the day, is all that is required of an accomplished man in Edinburgh, and these are accomplishments which the ladies, modest as they are, would require more modesty than is either natural or proper to suppose themselves incapable of acquiring. That ignorance of

the learned languages and ancient literature, which the men have not the assurance to attempt disguising, has broken down effectually the first and most insurmountable barrier which separates the intellectual pretensions of the two sexes in England, and, indeed, in almost all the capitals of Europe. The universal neglect with which the more ancient and massy literature, even of our own island, seems to be treated, has removed another mighty, although not quite so insurmountable barrier; and, in short, between the men and the women, for aught I can see, there is no "gulf fixed." The men, indeed, seem still to be anxious to prolong, in their own favour, the existence of something of that old *prestige*, which owes the decay of its vigour entirely to themselves. But the greatest Mysogynists in the world have never accused the sex of being deficient in acuteness of discernment, and the ladies of Edinburgh are quite sufficiently quick-sighted, not to allow the advantages which have been given them, to slip unused through their fingers.

So far as I may judge from my own short experience, however, the Scottish ladies, in general, are very far from pushing these advantages to any undue extent. It is not necessary to enter minutely into the causes of their forbearance in this respect; for a much slower person than Mr. David Williams would have no great difficulty in forming a pretty fair guess, as to the most efficient of them. The merit which they do certainly possess and exemplify in this part of their conduct, may perhaps be divided into pretty equal shares between the influences of Nature and those of Art. Those gentler and more delicate feelings of our nature, which all their modes of life—their hopes, fears, pleasures, and sorrows, render them better able to appreciate, are alone, I should think, more than enough to weaken with the best of them the influence of those lighter and more transitory feelings,' which derive gratification or uneasiness from the conscious possession or conscious want of such a measure of literary information, as is common among either the men or the women with whom they can be called upon to associate. With

those of a less feminine and less just character, in point of mere feeling, there cannot be wanting enough of penetration to teach them, that the confession of inferiority is one of the most cunning treacheries with which to bait the hook of female fascination; and thus it is that the highest and most sacred of inspirations, on the one hand, co-operate with not a few less lofty and generous suggestions on the other, to keep within limits the infection of blue-stockingism—the one set of motives, as might befit their origin, attacking the secret root and essence of the mania for insignificant acquisition—the other no less appropriately, and no less powerfully, chilling and repressing the mania for insignificant display.

There are, however, abundant exceptions to this rule even here. Innate and incorrigible vanity in some; particular incidents in the early history of others, too minute to be explained in any general terms of description; and in a few cases, without doubt, the consciousness of capacity of a really extraordinary nature, have been sufficient to create a certain number of characters, which are somewhat inaccurately and unjustly classed together by the gentlemen of Edinburgh, under the appellation of "our Blue-stockings." With the chief and most prominent persons of this class, it has as yet been my good or evil fortune to come very little in contact. My introductions into society in this place have been mostly through the intervention of the men of high literary character, and these are here, as everywhere, the greatest, that is to say, the most contemptuous enemies the Blue-stocking tribe has to encounter. Last night, however, I was present at a small rout, or *conwerzatione*, which, although the lady of the house is by no means a Blue-stocking, had not a little of the appearance of a Blue-stocking party about it. A number of the principal *Bas-bleus* were there, and a considerable proportion of the literati, small and great, were, of course, in attendance. In short, I suspect it was as near an approach to the true and genuine scene, as I am likely to have an opportunity of observing.

I was ushered into a room decently crowded with very well-

drest people, and not having any suspicion that much amusement was likely to be had, I privately intended to make my bow to Mrs. ——, and retire as soon as possible—for I had left a very snug party over their claret at my friend W——'s, and certainly thought I could spend the rest of the evening more agreeably with them, than at any such rout as I had yet met with in Edinburgh. I had not been long in the room, however, when I heard Mr. J—— announced, and as I had not seen him for some time, I resolved to stay, and, if possible, enjoy a little of his conversation in some corner. When he entered, I confess I was a good deal struck with the different figure he made from what I had seen at C——g C——k. Instead of the slovenly set-out which he then sported—the green jacket, black neckcloth, and grey pantaloons—I have seldom seen a man more nice in his exterior than Mr. J—— now seemed to be. His little person looked very neat in the way he had now adorned it. He had a very well-cut blue-coat—evidently not after the design of any Edinburgh artist—light kerseymere breeches, and ribbed silk stockings—a pair of elegant buckles—white kid gloves, and a tri-color watch-ribbon. He held his hat under his arm in a very *degagée* manner—and altogether he was certainly one of the last men in the assembly, whom a stranger would have guessed to be either a great lawyer or a great reviewer. In short, he was more of a Dandy than any great author I ever saw—always excepting Tom Moore and David Williams.

Immediately after him, Dr. B—— came into the room, equipped in an equally fashionable, though not quite so splendid manner, and smiling on all around with the same mild, gentle air, which I had observed on his entrance to his lecture-room. Close upon his heels followed Professor L——, with a large moss-rose in his bosom. The Professor made his obeisance to one or two ladies that stood near him, and then fixing himself close by the fire-place, assumed an aspect of blank abstraction, which lasted for many minutes without the least alteration. The expression of his massy features and large grey eyes, rolling about while he stood in

this attitude, was so solemn, that nothing could have formed a more amusing contrast to the light and smiling physiognomies of the less contemplative persons around him. I saw that Mr. J—— was eyeing him all the while with a very quizzical air, and indeed heard him whisper something about *heat*, to Lady ——, with whom he was conversing, which I fear could have been nothing more innocent than some sarcasm against the ruminating philosopher. For my part, I now perceived plainly, that I was in a rout of no ordinary character, and, rubbing my spectacles, prepared to make the best use of my time.

While I was studying very attentively the fine hemispherical development of the organ of Casuality, in the superior part of Mr. L——'s head, I heard the name of the Earl of B——, travelling up the stair-case, from the mouth of one lackey to that of another, and looked round with some curiosity to see the brother of the celebrated Chancellor E——. His lordship came into the room with a quick and hurried step, which one would not have expected from the venerable appearance of his white hairs—the finest white hairs, by the way, I ever saw, and curling in beautiful ringlets all down his shoulders. I could easily trace a strong family resemblance to his brother, although the Earl has much the advantage, in so far as mere beauty of lineament is concerned. I do not remember to have seen a more exquisite old head, and think it is no wonder that so many portraits have been painted of him by the artists of Edinburgh. The features are all perfect; but the greatest beauty is in his clear blue eyes, which are chased in his head in a way that might teach something to the best sculptor in the world. Neither is there any want of expression in these fine features; although, indeed, they are very far from conveying any thing like the same ideas of power and penetration, which fall from the overhanging shaggy eye-brows of his brother. The person of the old Earl is also very good; his legs, in particular, are well shaped, and wonderfully muscular in their appearance, considering their length of service.

He ran up immediately to Professor L——, with whom he seemed to be on terms of infinite familiarity, and began to talk about the new plan for a Grand National Monument in Scotland, in honour of the conclusion of the late war. "My dear Professor," said he, "you must really subscribe—your name, you know, merely your name. As the Duke of Sussex says to myself in a letter I received from his Royal Highness only this morning, upon this very subject—Lady B——'s nephew is aid-de-camp to his Royal Highness, and he is particularly kind and attentive on my account—His Royal Highness says, he has just taken the liberty (he does me too much honour) to put me down as one of the committee. My dear Lord B——, are his Royal Highness's words, we positively can't go on without you—you must give us your name—Now do, Professor, do give us your name." And then, without looking or waiting for the worthy professor's reply, his Lordship passed across the room to Mr. J——, and seizing him by the button, and whispering close into his ear, began making the very same request (for I could catch the words "Duke of Sussex,") in, I doubt not, the same phrase. But he stopped not for the reply of Mr. J—— any more than for that of Professor L——; and after looking round the room for a single moment, he vanished through a folding-door into an inner apartment, where, from some preparatory screams of a violin that reached my ear, I had no doubt there was about to be an interlude of concert, to break the intense seriousness of thought, supposed to be inseparable from the keen intellectual collisions of a *conversazione*.

On looking into the room which had just received Lord B——, I observed him to take his place among a row of musical cognoscenti, male and female, who already occupied a set of chairs disposed formally all around the centre of enchantment. By and bye, a young lady began thumping on the piano-forte, and I guessed, from the exquisite accompaniment of Mr. Yaniewicz, that it was her design to treat us with some beautiful airs in the Don Giovanni of Mozart. Nothing, however, could be more utterly distressing, than the

mode in which the whole of her performance murdered that divine master-piece, unless, indeed, it might be the nauseous sing-song of compliments, which the ignorance or the politeness of the audience thundered out upon its conclusion.

After this blessed consummation had restored to us the free use of our limbs and tongues, (I say free—for in spite of nods, and whispers of rebuke, administered by some of the Dowagers, our silence had never been much more complete than the music merited,) I joined a small party, which had gradually clustered around Mr. J——, and soon found that the redoubtable critic had been so unfortunate as to fall into an ambush laid to entrap him by a skilful party of blue-stocking *tirailleures*. There he was pinioned up against the wall, and listening, with a greater expression of misery than I should have supposed to be compatible with his Pococurante disposition, to the hints of one, the remarks of another, the suggestion of a third, the rebuke of a fourth, the dissertation of a fifth, and last, not least, in this cruel catalogue of inflictions, to the questions of a sixth. "Well now, Mr. J——, don't you agree with me, in being decidedly of opinion, that Mr. S—— is the true author of the Tales of my Landlord? O Lord!—they're so like Mr. S——, some of the stories—one could almost believe one heard him telling them. Could not you do the same, Mr. J——?"—The shrug of ineffable derision which Mr. J—— vainly endeavoured to keep down, in making some inaudible reply of two syllables to this, did not a whit dismay another, who forthwith began to ply him with query upon query, about the conduct of Lord B——, in deserting his wife—and whether or not, he (Mr. J——) considered it likely, that Lord B—— had had himself, (Lord B——,) in his eye, in drawing the character of the Corsair—"and oh, now, Mr. J——, don't you think Gulnare so romantic a name? I wish I had been christened Gulnare. Can people change their names, Mr. J——, without an estate?"—"Why, yes, ma'am," replied the critic—after a most malicious pause, "by being married."—* * * * "Mr. J——," exclaimed a fierce-looking damsel with a mop head—"I in-

sist upon hearing if you have read Peter Bell—will you ever be convinced? Shall I ever be able to persuade you? Can you deny the beauty of the white sapling—'as white as cream?' Can you be blind to the pathetic incident of the poor ass kneeling under the blows of the cruel, hard-hearted, odious Peter? Can you be blind to the charm of the boat?"

"Why—oh—the laker has made a good deal of his tub—'*Twin sister to the Crescent-Moon.*'"

"Ah! naughty man, you are incorrigible—I'll go speak to Mr. W——n."

I looked round, and saw Mr. W——n. He had a little book of fishing-flies in his hand, and was loudly and sonorously explaining the beauty of a bit of grizzled hackle on the wings of one of them to Mr. M——. My venerable friend seemed to be listening with the deepest interest to what he said, but the young lady broke in upon their conversation with the utmost intrepidity. I could just hear enough of what passed, to be satisfied, that the brother poet made as light of the matter as the adverse critic. I suspect, that from the cruelty of Peter Bell's bludgeon, she made a transition to the cruelty of killing poor innocent trouts; but before that subject had time to be adequately discussed, supper was announced, and I descended close behind Mr. J——, who had a lady upon each arm, one all the way down discussing the Bank Restriction Bill, and the other displaying equal eloquence in praise of "that delightful—that luminous article in the last number upon the Corn Laws."

Ever your's.

P. M.

LETTER XXV.

TO THE SAME.

* * * * *

* * * * *

I WAS never a lover of Blue-Stockings either at home or abroad; but of all that I have met with, I think the French are the most tolerable, and the Scotch the most tormenting. In France, the genuine power and authority which the women exert, and have long exerted, in swaying the course of public opinion in regard to a vast variety of subjects, are sufficient, were there nothing more, to make one excuse a great deal of their petulance and presumption. And then there is a light graceful ease about the manner of their trespasses, which would carry off the indignation of a Diogenes himself. How is it possible to feel any serious displeasure against a pretty creature that comes tripping up to you with a fan in her hand, and seems quite indifferent whether you ask her to dance a quadrille with you, or sit down by her side, and discuss the merits of the last *roman*? The truth is, however, that the French ladies in general talk about things they do understand something about—or at least, which it is easy and natural to imagine, may be interesting to their feelings. But what say you to the Scottish Blue-Stockings, whose favourite topics are the Resumption of Cash-payments, the great question of Borough Reform, and Corn-Bill? They are certainly the very *flour* of their sex. "Ohe! jam satis est"—I would not be badgered as Mr. J—— is for a moiety of his reputation.

I was at another party of somewhat the same kind last night, where, however, I had the satisfaction of seeing several more characters of some note, and, therefore, I repented not my going. Among others, I was introduced to

Mrs. G—— of L——n, the author of the Letters from the Mountains, and other well-known works. Mrs. G—— is really a woman of great talents and acquirements, and might, without offence to any one, talk upon any subject she pleases. But I assure you, any person that hopes to meet with a Blue-Stocking, in the common sense of the term, in this lady, will feel sadly disappointed. She is as plain, modest, and unassuming, as she could have been had she never stepped from the village, whose name she has rendered so celebrated. Instead of entering on any long common-place discussions, either about politics, or political economy, or any other of the hackneyed subjects of tea-table talk in Edinburgh, Mrs. G—— had the good sense to perceive, that a stranger, such as I was, came not to hear disquisitions, but to gather useful information; and she therefore directed her conversation entirely to the subject which she herself best understands—which, in all probability, she understands better than almost any one else—and which was precisely one of the subjects, in regard to which I felt the greatest inclination to hear a sensible person speak—namely, the Highlands. She related, in a very simple, but very graphic manner, a variety of little anecdotes and traits of character, with my recollections of which I shall always have a pleasure in connecting my recollections of herself. The sound and rational enjoyment I derived from my conversation with this excellent person, would, indeed, atone for much more than all the Blue-Stocking sisterhood have ever been able to inflict upon my patience.

Ever your's,

P. M.

LETTER XXVI.

TO THE SAME.

I REMEMBER when Kean, in the first flush of his reputation, announced his intention of spending Passion-week in Edinburgh, to have seen a paragraph extracted from a Scots newspaper, in which this circumstance was commented on in a way that I could scarcely help regarding as a little ridiculous. I cannot recall the exact words; but the northern editor expressed himself somewhat in this style—"We are happy to hear it rumoured, that the celebrated new actor, Mr. Kean, proposes making his first appearance on our boards during the approaching holidays. He no doubt feels much anxiety to have the favourable opinion of the London public confirmed and sanctioned by the more fastidious and delicate discrimination, which, as all the sons of Thespis are well aware, belongs to the enlightened and refined, although candid and generous, audience of our metropolis."

What the measure of Mr. Kean's anxiety on this occasion might really have been, I possess no means of learning; but from all that I have seen and heard of the Edinburgh audience, I must confess I do not think, were I myself an actor, their favourable verdict would be exactly the crowning and finishing grace, for which I should wait with any very supernatural timidity of expectation. That they should for a moment dream of themselves as being entitled to claim weight and authority, equal (to say nothing of superior) to what is claimed and received by the great audience of the British capital—this is a thing, at the first glance, so superabounding in absurdity, that I could scarcely have believed it to be actually the case, unless, from innumerable little circumstances and expressions which have fallen under my own observation, I had been compelled to do so. How old this ridiculous prejudice of self-complacency may be, I know not; but I suspect that it, like many other ridiculous prejudices of the

place, has been fostered and pampered into its present luxuriant growth by the clamorous and triumphant success of the Edinburgh Review. Accustomed to see one or two of their fellow citizens sitting in undisputed pre-eminence above all the authors of England, it must have seemed a small matter that they themselves should claim equal awe from the actors of England, when these ventured to think of strutting their hour on this side of the "Ideal Line."—However this may be, there is no doubt the notion does exist, and the Edinburgh audience *bona fide* consider themselves as the most polite assemblage of theatrical critics that the world has produced since the days of Athens. I think Aristophanes, could he look up and see them, would observe a very sad change from his own favourite σοφατατοι θεαται.

There is no doubt, that the size of such a theatre as the Edinburgh one is much more favourable to accuracy of criticism, than a house of larger dimensions can be. It is somewhat larger than the Hay-Market; but it is quite possible to observe the minutest workings of an actor's face from the remotest parts of the pit or the boxes; and the advantages, in point of hearing, are, of course, in somewhat the same measure. The house, however, has newly been lighted up in a most brilliant manner with gas; and this, I should think, must be any thing rather than an improvement, in so far as purposes, truly theatrical, are concerned. Nothing, indeed, can be more beautiful than the dazzling effect exhibited, when one first enters the house—before, perhaps, the curtain is drawn up. The whole light proceeds from the centre of the roof, where one large sun of crystal hangs in a blazing atmosphere, that defies you to look up to it—circle within circle of white flame, all blended and glowing into one huge orb of intolerable splendour. Beneath this flood of radiance, every face in the audience, from the gallery to the orchestra, is seen as distinctly as if all were seated in the open light of noon-day. And the unaccustomed spectator feels, when his box-door is opened to him, as if he were stepping into a brilliant ball-room, much more than as if he were entering a theatre.

But the more complete the illumination of the whole house, the more difficult it of course must be to throw any concentrating and commanding degree of light upon the stage; and the consequence, I should think, is, that the pleasure which this audience now derive from looking at each other, is just so much taken from the pleasure which, in former times, they might have had in looking at the performers. There is nothing more evident, than that the stage should always be made to wear an appearance in all respects as different as possible from the rest of the theatre. The spectator should be encouraged by all possible arts to imagine himself a complete eavesdropper, a peeper, and a listener, who is hearing and seeing things that he has no proper right to hear and see. And it is for this reason, that I approve so much of the arrangement usually observed in the French, the German, but most of all, in the Italian theatres, which, while it leaves the whole audience enveloped in one sheet of dim and softened gloom, spreads upon the stage and those that tread it, a flood of glory, which makes it comparatively an easy matter to suppose, that the curtain which has been drawn up was a part of the veil that separates one world of existence from another. In such a theatre, the natural inclination every one feels is to be as silent as possible—as if it were not to betray the secret of an ambush. The attention, when it is drawn at all to the stage, is drawn thither entirely; and one feels as if he were guilty of a piece of foolish negligence every moment he removes his gaze from the only point of light on which he has the power to rest it. * * * In such a theatre as that of Edinburgh, on the contrary, all is alike dazzle and splendour. The Dandy of the Green-room is not a whit more ridiculous, or a whit better seen, than his double close by your side; and every blaze of rouge or pearl-powder displayed by the Pseudo-Belles of the distance, finds its counterpart or rival on the cheek or shoulder of some real goddess on your fore-ground. In short, a poor innocent Partridge, introduced for the first time to theatrical spectacle in such a place as this, would, I think, be not a little at a loss to discover at what part of the

house it should be his business to look. He would of course join in every burst of censure or applause; but he might, perhaps, be mistaken in his idea of what had called for the clamour. He might take the ogle of Miss —— for a too impudent clap-trap, or perhaps be caught sobbing his heart out in sympathy with some soft flirtation-scene in the back-row of Lady ——'s side-box.

Whatever other effects it might have, this mode of illumination was at least very useful to me in my inspection of the redoubtable Edinburgh audience. These great bug-bears of criticism could not hide one of their heads from me, and there I was armed cap-a-pee with the whole proof of Cranioscopical and Physiognomical acumen, to reconnoitre their points of strength and of weakness with equal facility and equal safety. I looked first, as in duty bound, to the gods; but could see nothing there worthy of detaining my attention, except the innocent stare of a young country girl, who seemed to be devouring the drop-scene with both her eyes, and at the same time rewarding with an hysterical giggle, the soft things whispered into her ear by a smooth red-nosed, rather elderly serving-man, who appeared to have much the air of being at home on the brink of that Olympus. Neither did the boxes seem to present any very great field of observation; but, in fact, most of the leading physiognomies in that region of the house were already quite sufficiently familiar to me. It was in the pit that my eyes at once detected their richest promise of a regale. The light falling directly upon the skulls in that quarter, displayed, in all becoming splendour, every bump and hollow of every critical cranium below me.

They belonged for the most part, as Mr. W—— whispered to me, to young attornies, and clerks, and apprentices of the same profession, who are all set free from their three-legged stools and fustian sleeves early every Saturday evening, and who commonly make use of this liberty to show their faces in the pit. A few lawyers of a higher order might be seen looking rather superciliously around them, sprinkled here and there over the surface of the crowd. Nor were there

wanting some faces of more stable breadth, and more immovable dulness, than are almost ever exhibited even by the dullest of the legal tribe—a few quiet comfortable citizens I could see, who certainly looked very much like sheep among foxes, although I by no means take them to be positive simpletons neither. Perhaps the unquestioning looks of happy anticipation with which these good people seemed to be waiting for the commencement of the play, gave quite as much promise of just criticism as the pert, peaked features, the impatient *nasi adunci*, and merciless pertinacity of grin displayed by the jurisprudential Zoili round about them. Such as the two elements were, I could perceive that they were to form between them, as best they might, the critical touch-stone of the evening.—Again I quote, *omne ignotum pro magnifico.*—

* * * *

The piece was the new Drama founded upon the novel of Rob Roy. I had promised myself much pleasure in seeing it, from the accounts I had heard of the two principal performers that make their appearance in it, and I was never less disappointed. The scenery, in the first place, was as splendid as possible; indeed, till within these very few years, London never could show any thing in the least capable of sustaining a comparison with it. Whether the stage was to represent the small snug parlour of Baillie Jarvie in the Salt-market of Glasgow, or the broad and romantic magnificence of Loch Katrine, winding and receding among groves of birch and mountains of heather, the manager had exerted equal liberality, and his artists equal skill, to complete the charm of their counterfeit. There is something very delightful in observing the progress which theatrical taste is making among us, in regard to this part of its objects at least. Nothing gratifies one more than to see that great pains have been taken to please them; and a whole audience is sensible to this kind of pleasure, when they see a new play got up with a fine fresh stock of scenery, to salute their eyes with

novelty at every turn of the story. Besides, in such a play as this, it would have been quite intolerable to discover any want of inclination to give its heroes every possible advantage of visual accompaniment to their exertions. Every body was already as well acquainted as possible with Mattie, Major Galbraith, Andrew Fairservice, and the Dugald Creature —to say nothing of those noble kinsmen, Baillie Jarvie and Rob Roy; and every one would have looked upon it as a sort of insult to his own sense and discernment, had he seen any of these dear friends, otherwise than in the same dress and place in which they had already been introduced, and rendered familiar to him by the great Magician, whose wand had called them into being. I confess, however, that familiar as I had long been with these characters, and with that of the Baillie, *imprimis*, I was perfectly refreshed and delighted when they stood before me, living and moving in actual bodily presence. The illusion of theatrical deception cannot possibly be carried farther than it was in the case of Baillie Jarvie, as personified on this occasion by Mr. Mackay. I could have sworn that every curl in his neat brown periwig—every button on his well-brushed, dark, purple coat—every wrinkle in his well-blacked, tall, tight boots, had been familiar to me from infancy. And then the face—what a fine characteristic leanness about the jaws—not the least appearance of starvation or feebleness, but the true horny firmness of texture that I had always pictured to myself in the physiognomy of a Common-council-man of the Land of Cakes! And what truth of expression in the grey eyes of the worthy warm-hearted Baillie! The high aerial notes at the ending of his sentences, and the fine circumnavigation of sound in his diphthongs, were quite new to my imagination, but I could not for a single moment suspect them of being any other than authentic. I could scarce believe him when he said, "a body canna carry the Saut-market upon his back."

The "Dugald Creature" was quite as good in his way—indeed even better, for it must have required no trivial stretch of power to be able to embody so much rudeness without taking

a single iota from so much poetry of character. Rob Roy himself made a glorious appearance in his blazing tartans, eagle plume, target and broad-sword; and nobody that saw him could question his right to levy "black mail"—a single glance was sufficient to show, that, in the opinion of such a personage as this which trod the stage before us,

> "Rents and Factors, Rights of Chace,
> Sheriffs, Lairds, and their domains,
> All had seemed but paltry things,
> Not worth a moment's pains."

Mr. Murray (the manager) himself personated "the Saxon Captain," who is made prisoner by Roy's wife, in a style of perfect propriety, looking more like a soldier, and infinitely more like a gentleman, than almost any actor of the present day, that I have seen on either side of the Tweed. I admired particularly the strict attention which he had paid to his costume; for he made his appearance in a suit of uniform, which I suppose, must have been shaped exactly after the pattern of the Duke of Cumberland's statue. The profuse flaps and skirts of the coat, and the smart, ferocious cock of the small hat, perched on the top of several rows of beautiful stiff curls, carried one back at once to the heart of the days of Marlborough and Bickerstaff.

Perhaps the most purely delightful part of the whole play, was the opening of one of the acts, when I found myself suddenly transported into the glen of Aberfoil, and heard the pibroch of the Macgregors stealing along the light breeze of the morning, among those very shores which had been spread before my fancy in so many hues of Arcadian delight, by the novel itself, and the Lady of the Lake, its kindred predecessor. Already I feel that it is impossible I should leave Scotland without visiting, in good earnest, these romantic scenes. However, I must allow the season to be somewhat better advanced, ere I think of venturing upon that excursion. I am determined, indeed, to delay it as long as I can,

in order that I may see it when adorned with its whole midsummer garniture of leaves.

Mr. Murray acts as manager in behalf of Mrs. Henry Siddons, whose husband had taken a long lease of the Theatre shortly before his death. I think you once told me that you had seen this charming actress play at Bath, therefore I need not say any thing about her style of performance. She is, I believe, appreciated here as she ought to be; indeed, I know not that it is possible for any audience, wherever assembled, or however composed, to be insensible to the chaste and delicate fascination of that most feminine sort of acting. In looking at her, one feels that there would be a want of gallantry in not being delighted with so pure a picture of every thing that renders the captivation of womanly gracefulness complete. I speak at present, of course, of her most favourite walk. But you probably are well aware that Mrs. Henry Siddons is scarcely less successful, when she goes down many steps in the scale of character. Nor do you need to be told, that, in the highest walk of the art itself, she displays not unfrequently a power, and energy, and dignity of feeling, which are less talked of than they deserve to be, only because it is not possible to forget, when thinking of the daughter-in-law, the deeper and more majestic magic of the unrivalled mother.

The birth of Mrs. Siddons and her brother, (for they are of an ancient Scottish family,) creates no inconsiderable feeling of interest in their favour, among this pedigree-revering people. The uniform propriety, and indeed amiable and exemplary modesty of their own character and deportment, in all the relations of private life, may well furnish them with yet better claims to the kindness of their fellow-citizens.

P. M.

LETTER XXVII.

TO THE SAME.

* * * * * *

* * * * * *

I SHOULD be very much at a loss, if I were obliged to say positively, either at what hour or from what point of view, the external appearance of this city is productive of the noblest effect. I walk round and round it, and survey it from east, west, north, and south, and every where it assumes some new and glorious aspect, which delights me so much at the moment, that I am inclined to think I have at last hit upon the true station from whence to survey its beauties. A few steps bring me to some new eminence, from which some yet wider and more diversified picture of its magnificence opens itself to my eyes, or perhaps to some winding ravine, the dark and precipitous sides of which, while they shut out much of this imposing expanse of magnitude, form a deep and concentrating frame-work, in whose centre some one isolated fragment assumes a character of sublimity, that seems almost to throw the wider field of variety and splendour into temporary shade. I have at last given up the attempt; and am contented to let my admiration be as impartial as the charm is universal.

In every point of view, however, the main centre of attraction is the Castle of Edinburgh. From whatever side you approach the city—whether by water or by land—whether your foreground consist of height or of plain, of heath, of trees, or of the buildings of the city itself—this gigantic rock lifts itself high above all that surrounds it, and breaks upon the sky with the same commanding blackness of mingled crags, cliffs, buttresses, and battlements. These, indeed, shift and vary their outlines at every step, but every where

there is the same unmoved effect of general expression—the same lofty and imposing image, to which the eye turns with the same unquestioning worship. Whether you pass on the southern side, close under the bare and shattered blocks of granite, where the crumbling turrets on the summit seem as if they had shot out of the kindred rock in some fantastic freak of Nature—and where, amidst the overhanging mass of darkness, you vainly endeavour to descry the track by which Wallace scaled—or whether you look from the north, where the rugged cliffs find room for some scanty patches of moss and broom, to diversify their barren grey—and where the whole mass is softened into beauty by the wild green glen which intervenes between the spectator and its foundations—wherever you are placed, and however it is viewed, you feel at once that here is the eye of the landscape, and the essence of the grandeur.

Neither is it possible to say under what sky or atmosphere all this appears to the greatest advantage. The heavens may put on what aspect they choose, they never fail to adorn it. Changes that elsewhere deform the face of nature, and rob her of half her beauty, seem to pass over this majestic surface only to dress out its majesty in some new apparel of magnificence. If the air is cloudless and serene, what can be finer than the calm reposing dignity of those old towers—every delicate angle of the fissured rock, every loop-hole and every lineament seen clearly and distinctly in all their minuteness? or, if the mist be wreathed around the basis of the rock, and frowning fragments of the citadel emerge only here and there from out the racking clouds that envelope them, the mystery and the gloom only rivet the eye the faster, and half-baffled Imagination does more than the work of Sight. At times, the whole detail is lost to the eye—one murky tinge of impenetrable brown wraps rock and fortress from the root to the summit—all is lost but the outline; but the outline atones abundantly for all that is lost.—The cold glare of the sun, plunging slowly down into a melancholy west beyond them, makes all the broken labyrinth of towers,

batteries, and house-tops paint their heavy breadth in ten-fold sable magnitude upon that lurid canvass.—At break of day, how beautiful is the freshness with which the venerable pile appears to rouse itself from its sleep, and look up once more with a bright eye into the sharp and dewy air!—At the "grim and sultry hour" of noon, with what languid grandeur the broad flag seems to flap its long weight of folds above the glowing battlements! When the day-light goes down in purple glory, what lines of gold creep along the hoary brow of its antique strength! When the whole heaven is deluged, and the winds are roaring fiercely, and "snow and hail, and stormy vapour," are let loose to make war upon his front, with what an air of pride does the veteran citadel brave all their well-known wrath, "cased in the unfeeling armour of old time!" The capitol itself is but a pigmy to this giant.

But here, as every-where, moonlight is the best. Wherever I spend the evening, I must always walk homewards by the long line of Prince's-Street; and along all that spacious line, the midnight shadows of the Castle-rock for ever spread themselves forth, and wrap the ground on which I tread in their broad repose of blackness. It is not possible to imagine a more majestic accompaniment for the deep pause of that hour. The uniform splendour of the habitations on the left opening every now and then broken glimpses up into the very heart of the modern city—the magnificent terrace itself, with its stable breadth of surface—the few dying lamps that here and there glimmer faintly—and no sound, but the heavy tread of some far-off watchman of the night—this alone might be enough, and it is more than almost any other city could afford. But turn to the right, and see what a glorious contrast is there. The eternal rock sleeping in the stillness of nature—its cliffs of granite—its tufts of verdure—all alike steeped in the same unvarying hue of mystery—its towers and pinnacles rising like a grove of quiet poplars on its crest—the whole as colourless as if the sun had never shone there, as silent as if no voice of man had ever disturbed the echoes of the solemn

scene. Overhead, the sky is all one breathless canopy of lucid crystal blue—here and there a small bright star twinkling in the depth of æther—and full in the midst, the moon walking in her vestal glory, pursuing, as from the bosom of eternity, her calm and destined way—and pouring down the silver of her smiles upon all of lovely and sublime that nature and art could heap together, to do homage to her radiance. How poor, how tame, how worthless, does the converse even of the best and wisest of men appear, when faintly and dimly remembered amidst the sober tranquillity of this heavenly hour! How deep the gulf that divides the tongue from the heart—the communication of companionship from the solitude of man! How soft, yet how awful, the beauty and the silence of the hour of spirits!

I think it was one of the noblest conceptions that ever entered into the breast of a poet, which made Göethe open his Faustus with a scene of moonlight. The restlessness of an intellect wearied with the vanity of knowledge, and tormented with the sleepless agonies of doubt—the sickness of a heart bruised and buffeted by all the demons of presumption—the wild and wandering throbs of a soul parched among plenty, by the blind cruelty of its own dead affections—these dark and depressing mysteries all maddening within the brain of the Hermit Student, might have suggested other accompaniments to one who had looked less deeply into the nature of man—who had felt less in his own person of that which he might have been ambitious to describe. But this great master of intellect was well aware to what thoughts, and what feelings, the perplexed and the bewildered are most anxious to return. He well knew where it is, that Nature has placed the best balm for the wounds of the spirit—by what indissoluble links she has twined her own eternal influences around the dry and chafed heart-strings that have most neglected her tenderness. It is thus, that his weary and melancholy sceptic speaks—his phial of poison is not yet mingled on his table—but the tempter is already listening at his ear, that would not allow him to leave the world until he should have plunged

yet deeper into his snares, and added sins against his neighbour, to sins against God, and against himself. I wish I could do justice to his words in a translation—or rather that I had Coleridge nearer me.

Would thou wert gazing now thy last
Upon my troubles, glorious Harvest Moon!
Well canst thou tell how all my nights have past,
Wearing away, how slow, and yet how soon!
Alas! alas! sweet Queen of Stars,
Through dreary dim monastic bars,
To me thy silver radiance passes,
Illuminating round me masses
Of dusty books, and mouldy paper,
That are not worthy of so fair a taper.
O might I once again go forth,
To see thee gliding through thy fields of blue,
Along the hill-tops of the north;—
O might I go, as when I nothing knew,
Where meadows drink thy softening gleam,
And happy spirits twinkle in the beam,
To steep my heart in thy most healing dew.

* * * * *

* * * * *

LETTER XXVIII.

TO THE REV. DAVID WILLIAMS.

I HAVE already told you, that the Bar is the great focus from which the rays of interest and animation are diffused throughout the whole mass of society, in this northern capital. Compared with it, there is no object or congregation of objects, which can be said to have any wide and commanding grasp of the general attention. The Church—the University—even my own celebrated Faculty, in this its great

seat of empire—all are no better than the "minora sidera," among which the luminaries of forensic authority and forensic reputation shine forth conspicuous and superior. Into whatever company the stranger may enter, he is sure, ere he has been half an hour in the place, to meet with something to remind him of the predominance of this great jurisprudential aristocracy. The names of the eminent leaders of the profession, pass through the lips of the ladies and gentlemen of Edinburgh, as frequently and as reverently as those of the great debaters of the House of Commons do through those of the ladies and gentlemen of London. In the absence of any other great centres of attraction, to dispute their pre-eminence in the general eye, the principal barristers are able to sustain and fix upon themselves, from month to month, and year to year, in this large and splendid city, something not unlike the same intensity of attention and admiration, which their brethren of the south may be too proud to command over the public mind of York or Lancaster, for two Assize-weeks in the year.

I think the profession makes a very tyrannical use of all these advantages. Not contented with being first, it is obvious they would fain be alone in the eye of admiration; and they seem to omit no opportunity of adding the smallest piece of acquisition to the already over-stretched verge of their empire. It is easy to see that they look upon the whole city as nothing more than one huge Inn of Court. set apart from end to end for the purposes of their own peculiar accommodation; and they strut along the spacious and crowded streets of this metropolis, with the same air of conscious possession and conscious dignity, which one meets with in London among the green and shadowy alleys of the Temple Gardens. Such is their satisfied assurance of the unrivalled dignity and importance of their calling, that they hold themselves entitled, wherever they are, to make free use not only of allusions, but of phrases, evidently borrowed from its concerns; and such has been the length of time during which all these instruments of encroachment have been at work, that memory

of their commencement and just sense of their tendency have alike vanished among the greater part of those in whose presence the scene of their habitual operation is laid. Even the women appear to think it quite necessary to succumb to the prevailing spirit of the place; and strive to acquire for themselves some smattering of legal phrases, with which to garnish that texture of political, critical, and erotical common-places, which they share with the Masters and Misses of other cities, wherein the pretensions of the Gens Togata are kept somewhat more within the limits of propriety. My friend W—— tells me, that, in the course of a love-correspondence, which once, by some unfortunate accident, got into general circulation in Edinburgh, among many other truly ludicrous exemplifications of the use of the legal style of courtship, there was one letter from the Strephon to the Phyllis, which began with, "Madam—in answer to your duplies, received of date as per margin." But this, no doubt, is one of W——'s pleasant exaggerations.

Although, however, the whole of the city, and the whole of its society, be more than enough redolent of the influence of this profession, it is by no means to be denied, that a very great share of influence is most justly due to the eminent services which its members have rendered, and are at the present time rendering to their country. It is not to be denied, that the Scottish lawyers have done more than any other class of their fellow-citizens, to keep alive the sorely threatened spirit of national independence in the thoughts and in the feelings of their countrymen. It is scarcely to be denied, that they have for a long time furnished, and are at this moment furnishing, the only example of high intellectual exertion, (beyond the case of mere individuals,) in regard to which Scotland may challenge a comparison with the great sister-state, which has drawn so much of her intellect and her exertion into the overwhelming and obscuring vortex of her superiority. It is a right and a proper thing, then, that Scotland should be proud of her Bar—and, indeed, when one reflects for a moment, what an immense overshadowing proportion of

all the great men she has produced have belonged, or at this moment do belong to this profession, it is quite impossible to be surprised or displeased, because so just a feeling may have been carried a little beyond the limit of mere propriety. It is not necessary to go back into the remote history of the Bar of Scotland, although, I believe, there is in all that history no one period devoid of its appropriate honours. One generation of illustrious men, connected with it throughout the whole, or throughout the greater part of their lives, has only just departed, and the memory of them and their exertions is yet fresh and unfaded. Others have succeeded to their exertions and their honours, whom they that have seen both, admit to be well worthy of their predecessors. Indeed, it is not necessary to say one word more concerning the present state of the profession than this—that, in addition to many names which owe very great and splendid reputation to the Bar alone, the gown is worn at this moment by two persons, whom all the world must admit to have done more than all the rest of their contemporaries put together, for sustaining and extending the honours of the Scottish name—both at home and abroad. You need scarcely be told, that I speak of Mr. W—— S—— and Mr. J——. The former of these has, indeed, retired from the practice of the Bar; but he holds a high office in the Court of Session. The other is in the full tide of professional practice, and of a professional celebrity, which could scarcely be obscured by any thing less splendid, than the extra-professional reputation which has been yet longer associated with his name—and which, indeed, is obviously of a much higher, as well as of a much more enduring character, than any reputation which any profession, properly so called, ever can have the power to bestow.

The courts of justice with which all these eminent men are so closely connected, are placed in and about the same range of buildings, which in former times were set apart for the accommodation of the Parliament of Scotland. The main approach to these buildings lies through a small oblong square, which takes from this circumstance the name of "the Par-

liament Close." On two sides this Close is surrounded by houses of the same gigantic kind of elevation which I have already described to you, and in these, of old, were lodged a great proportion of the dignitaries and principal practitioners of the adjacent courts. At present, however, they are dedicated, like most of the houses in the same quarter of the city, to the accommodation of trades-people, and the inferior persons attached to the Courts of Law. The western side of the quadrangle, is occupied in all its length by the Church of St. Giles's, which in the latter times of Scottish Episcopacy possessed the dignity of a Cathedral, and which, indeed, has been the scene of many of the most remarkable incidents in the ecclesiastical history of Scotland. In its general exterior, this church presents by no means a fine specimen of the Gothic architecture, although there are several individual parts about the structure which display great beauty—the tower, above all, which rises out of the centre of the pile, and is capped with a very rich and splendid canopy in the shape of a Crown Imperial. This beautiful tower and canopy form a fine point in almost every view of the city of Edinburgh; but the effect of the whole building, when one hears and thinks of it as a Cathedral, is a thing of no great significance. The neighbourhood of the Castle would indeed take something from the impression produced by the greatest Cathedral I am acquainted with, were it placed on the site of St. Giles's; but nothing assuredly could have formed a finer accompaniment of softening and soothing interest to the haughty and imperious sway of that majestic fortress, than some large reposing mass of religious architecture, lifting itself, as if under its protection, out of the heart of the city which it commands. The only want, if want there be, in the whole aspect of this city, is, that of some such type of the grandeur of Religion rearing itself in the air, in somewhat of its due proportion of magnitude and magnificence. It is the only great city, the first impression of whose greatness is not blended with ideas suggested by the presence of some such edifice, piercing the sky in splendour or in gloom, far

above the frailer and lowlier habitations of those that come to worship beneath its roof. You remember those fine lines of Wordsworth, when, talking of the general external aspect of England, he says—

> "Not wanting at wide intervals the bulk
> Of ancient Minster, lifted above the clouds
> Of the dense air, which town or city breeds,
> To intercept the sun's glad beams."—

I know not, indeed, that any advantages, even of natural grandeur of situation or scenery, can entirely make up for the want of some such effect as the poet would describe, in the general view of any city set apart for the dwelling-place of Men, and of Christians. It seems to be the most natural and proper of all things, that from whatever side the traveller approaches to a Christian city, his eye should be invited, nay, commanded, to repose on some majestic monument of its Faith and its Devotion.—Every one, for example, that has ever sailed up the Thames—the only avenue that is worthy of LONDON—must recollect what a grand mixture of feelings arose within him, when—beyond forests of masts, and above one dark, impenetrable, and limitless ocean of smoke,—he saw for the first time the holy dome of St. Paul's, hung afar off, serene and golden among the clouds. What a calm radiance of sanctity and sublimity does that mighty temple appear to diffuse over the huge city, stretched out in endless pomp and endless darkness at its feet! How that one supreme presence sheds gracefulness and majesty over all that is done beneath its shadow!

There is a plan in agitation at present for erecting a splendid church in Edinburgh, as a great National Monument, in memory of the events of the late war, and already I find a large sum of money has been subscribed for carrying this plan into execution. I heartily wish it speedy and entire success. The sketch which I have seen of the intended edifice, appears to me to be one of the finest things that architectural genius has for many ages produced. In front, there is a

portico, as grand as that of the Pantheon; behind this, a dome of most majestic height and dimension is lifted above a hall, around the exterior of which, tier above tier, and line within line of massy columns, are seen swelling or diminishing in endless variety of classical splendour. This hall is destined for the reception of statues and inscriptions, and it forms the entrance way into a stately church, which shoots out from the side opposite to the portico. Where it is proposed to place this fine edifice, I know not; but wherever it is placed, so it be placed at all, it cannot fail to add immeasurably to the effect of the finest situation, and the finest city in the world. But I have wandered widely from St. Giles's and the Parliament Close.

The southern side of the square, and a small part of the eastern side, are filled with venerable Gothic buildings, which for many generations have been devoted to the accommodation of the Courts of Law, but which are now entirely shut out from the eye of the public, by a very ill-conceived and tasteless front-work of modern device, including a sufficient allowance of staring square windows, and Ionic pillars and pilasters. What beauty the front of the structure may have possessed in its original state, I have no means of ascertaining; but Mr. W—— sighs every time we pass through the *Close*, as pathetically as could be wished, over "the glory that hath departed." At all events, there can be no question, that the present frontispiece is every way detestable. It is heavy and clumsy in itself; and extremely ill chosen, moreover, whether one considers the character and appearance of the hall to which it gives access, or the aspect of the cathedral, and the old buildings in immediate juxta-position without. Had it been resolved to remove entirely the seat of the Courts of Law, and provide for them more convenient and more extensive accommodation in some more modern part of the city, I am informed the money that has been thrown away within the last thirty years upon repairs and alterations, none of which have added any thing to the beauty or much

to the convenience of the old Courts, would have been abundantly sufficient to cover the expense of building the new.

Right in front of the main entrance to the Courts as they stand, a fine equestrian statue of Charles II. enjoys a much more conspicuous situation than the merits of its original seem at all entitled to claim—more particularly from the people of Scotland. I think it rather unfortunate that this should be the only statue which salutes the public eye in the streets of Edinburgh. To say the truth, he is the only one of all our monarchs for whose character I think it impossible to feel one touch of sympathy or respect. Even his more unfortunate brother had honesty of principle, and something of the feelings of an Englishman. But why should the poor pensioned profligate, whose wit only rendered his vices more culpable, and whose good temper only rendered them more dangerous—why should he be selected for such a mark of distinguishing and hallowing remembrance as this? I should have been better pleased to see Scotland atoning by some such symbol of reverence for her sad offences against his father.

I shall conduct you into the interior of the Parliament-House in my next letter.

P. M.

LETTER XXIX.

TO THE SAME.

After passing through one or two dark and dungeon-like lobbies or anti-chambers, or by whatever more appropriate name they may be designated, one enters by a low pair of folding-doors, into what is called the Outer-House, wherein all civil cases are tried, in the first instance, by individual Judges, or Lords Ordinaries, before being submitted to the ultimate decision either of the whole Bench, or of one of its great Divisions. On being admitted, one sees a hall of very

spacious dimensions, which, although not elegant in its finishing or decorations, has nevertheless an air of antique grandeur about it, that is altogether abundantly striking. The roof is very fine, being all of black oak, with the various arches of which it is composed resting one upon another, exactly as in Christ-Church Hall.

The area of this hall is completely filled with law-practitioners, consisting of Solicitors and Advocates, who move in two different streams, along the respective places which immemorial custom has allotted to them on the floor. The crowd which is nearest the door, and in which I first found myself involved, is that of the Solicitors, Agents, Writers, or Men of Business, (for by all these names are they called.) Here is a perfect whirl of eagerness and activity—every face alert, and sharpened into the acutest angles. Some I could see were darting about among the different bars, where pleadings were going forward, like midshipmen in an engagement, furnishing powder to the combatants. They brought their great guns, the advocates, to bear sometimes upon one Judge, and sometimes upon another; while each Judge might be discovered sitting calmly, like a fine piece of stone-work amidst the hiss of bombs and the roar of forty-pounders.

In the meantime, the "men of business," who were not immediately occupied in this way, paced rapidly along—each borne on his particular wave of this great tide of the affairs of men, but all having their faces well turned up above the crowd, and keeping a sharp look-out. This was, I think, their general attitude. It reminded me of trouts bobbing near the surface of a stream, all equally sharp-set and anxious for a snap at whatever is going. Any staring or idle person must have appeared quite out of place amongst them, like a fixed point among Epicurus's concourse of atoms; and indeed I think, after I began to collect myself a little, I could easily observe that I myself, standing firm in the midst of the hubbub, with my arms folded *ut mos est*, attracted some notice from a few of those that were hurrying past me, to and

fro, and ever and anon. Whether I looked like a client either in *esse* or in *posse*, I know not, but

> ——— "Some fell to such perusal of my face,
> As they would draw me;"

while I, in the mean time, could begin to discover here and there a few persons of more quiescent demeanour, who looked like some of those unfortunates, at whose expense this superb scene of motion is maintained and kept in action. Money may be compared to a momentum or impetus, of which one body loses as much as it imparts to another. The client, after having transferred a certain impetus to his agent, loses part of his alacrity, and is apt to stand still in the Parliament-House, with a rather disconsolate air; while he sees his agent (consolatory spectacle!) inspired with the momentum of which he himself is devested, and spinning about in every sort of curve, ellipsis, and parabola. The anxious gaze with which these individuals seemed to be contemplating the toss and tumult around them, formed a sufficient distinction between them and the cool, unconcerned, calmly perspicacious Dr. Morris. It was evident, that they could not at all enter, with any delight kindred to mine, into the sentiment of the luxurious Epicurean,

> "Suave mari magno turbantibus æquora ventis,
> E tuto alterius magnum spectare laborem."

Such of these litigants, again, as had come from the country, could be easily pointed out from among the other clients. Here and there I noticed a far-travelled Gaffer, conspicuous for his farmer's coat of grey, or lightest cærulean tincture—his staff in his ungloved horny fingers—and his clouted shoon, or tall, straight, discoloured pair of top-boots, walking about without reflecting,—to judge from his aspect—that the persons by whom he was surrounded had mouths which would make very little of demolishing a litigious farmer, with his whole stock and plenishing, and leaving no more vestige of

him than remained of Actæon, after he fell in with those very instruments which he himself had been wont to employ in the chase. He need only look about him, and see the whole pack. Here are,

> " Pamphagus et Dorceus et Oribasus; Arcades omnes;
> Nebrophonusque valens et trux cum Lælape Theron,
> Et pedibus Pterelas et naribus utilis Agre,
> Hylæusque fero nuper percussus ab apro,
> Deque lupo concepta Nape, pecudesque secuta
> Pœmenis, et natis comitata Harpya duobus,
> Et substricta gerens Sicyonius ilia Ladon;
> Et niveis Leucon, et villis Asbolus atris,
> Et patre Dictæo sed matre Laconide nati
> Labros et Agriodos, et acutæ vocis Hylactor,
> Quosque referre mora est."

If he had once fairly got into difficulties, and "a poinding" had gone out against him, the following would also apply:

> " Ille fugit per quæ fuerat loca sæpe secutus
> Heu! famulos fugit ipse suos. Clamare libebat
> Actæon ego sum: Dominum cognoscite vestrum.
> Vota animo desunt: resonat latratibus æther."

Neither Pamphagus, nor Labros, nor Ladon of the "substricta ilia," nor Leucon with the white wig, nor Asbolus with the black hair, nor the swift feet of Pterelas, nor the keen nostrils of Agre, nor the sharp bark of Hylactor, will relax into quiescence at his bidding, whose *petitions* had so often been sufficient to set all their energies in motion. How little will the memory of all his fees avail? how cruelly must he feel their fangs, whose snarling threats and tearing onset had afforded to himself so much matter of gratulation and applause, when some other was the victim!

Contrasted with the elder and maturer "men of business," who are generally attired in sober hues, the rising generation of Dandy-Clerks make a very shining appearance.—The dust of a process newly awakened from its sleep of lustrums is a sad thing on a snow-white pair of breeches; but it is amaz-

ing how clean and brilliant these young gentlemen contrive to look, and they deserve the utmost credit for it; for besides the venerable powder of resuscitated papers and documents, no trifling quantity of dust must be brought into the Parliament-House by the shoes of the multitude resorting thither, and kept flying about by the stir of their tumultuous parade. They are really the finest beaux I have seen in this city, or so at least they appeared to be, under the favourable circumstances of contrast in which I saw them. Their bright olive surtouts, with glossy collars of velvet—their smart green riding jackets,—their waistcoats beaming in all the diversified dazzle of stripe and spot,—their neckcloths *à la Waterloo* or *à la Belcher*—all these rainbows of glory could not fail to charm the eye with a delightful sense of splendour, among such an immense hazy atmosphere of rusty black broadcloth, and tattered bombazeens. The military swagger affected by some of these spruce scribes, and the ferocious audacity with which they seemed to be hurling their bunches of briefs from one desk to another, formed an equally striking contrast to the staid and measured step of the meditating pale-faced counsellors up to the ears in occupation on the one side,—and the careless pococurante lounge of their less busy juniors on the other. What a fine subject all this might have been for poor Bunbury! I wonder what made your friend Rose say,

"Your Dandy's at a discount out of London."

The Advocates, in the midst of their peripateticism, receive their fair proportion of all the dust that is flying, and thus, perhaps, some young men of their body may have an opportunity of acquiring a fine sober brown, to which their complexions might not have been very likely to attain through the medium of hard study. Upon the whole, they are a well thriven looking race of juvenile jurisconsults; but I certainly could not see many heads among them which Dr. Spurzheim would think of setting down as belonging to so many future

Voets and Poitiers. For the most part, however, they are at least so candid as to wear their own hair, and so to afford the initiated a fair opportunity of inspecting their various conformations of cranium. A few, indeed, bury all beauties and defects in that old bird's-nest of horse-hair and pomatum, which is in this place usually adhered to by the seniors alone; for you must know the costume of the Scottish Bar is far from being regulated in the same uniform manner with that of Westminster-Hall; and those advocates, who hold no official situation under the crown, are at liberty to pace the floor of the Parliament House with or without wigs, exactly as it may please their fancy. I confess I should think it were better, either that all had wigs, or that all wanted them; for at present the mixture of bushy heads of hair, *à la Berlin*, or *à la Cossack*, with stiff rows of curls, toupees, and three tails, presents a broken and pyebald sort of aspect, to which my southern optics cannot easily reconcile themselves. Perhaps it were best to reinstate the wig in its full rights, and make it a *sine qua non* in the wardrobe of every counsellor; for if it be fairly allowed to disappear, the gown will probably follow; and in process of time, we may see the very Judges, like those Mr. Fearon saw in Connecticut, giving decisions in loose great coats, and black silk neckcloths.

Another circumstance that offended me in the appearance of the barristers, is their total want of rule in regard to their nether integuments. I, that have been a Pro-proctor in my day, cannot away with boots, trowsers, and gaiters, worn under a gown. I think a gown implies *dress*, and that the advocates should wear nothing but black breeches and stockings when in court, as is the case in the south. These are very small matters; but it is astonishing how much effect such small matters produce in the general appearance of a Court of Justice—where, indeed, above all places in the world, propriety of appearance, in regard even to the most minute things, should always be studiously considered.

Ever your's.

P. M.

LETTER XXX.

TO THE SAME.

By degrees I won my way through several different currents of the crowd, and established myself with my back to the wall, full in the centre of the Advocates' side of the house. Here I could find leisure and opportunity to study the minutiæ of the whole scene, and in particular to "fill in my foreground," as the painter's phrase runs, much more accurately than when I was myself mingled with the central tumult of the place. My position resembled that of a person visiting a peristrephic panorama, who, himself immoveable in a darksome corner, beholds the whole dust and glare of some fiery battle pass, cloud upon cloud, and flash upon flash, before his eyes. Here might be seen some of the "Magnanimi Heroes," cleaving into the mass, like furious wedges, in order to reach their appointed station—and traced in their ulterior progress only by the casual glimpses of "the proud horsehair nodding on the crest"—while others, equally determined and keen ἐν προμαχοισι μαχεσθαι, from their stature and agility, might be more properly compared to so many shuttles driven through the threads of an intricate web by some nimble-jointed weaver, Μικροι μεν αλλα Μαχηται. On one side might be observed some first-rate champion, pausing for a moment with a grin of bloody relaxation, to breathe after one ferocious and triumphant charge—his plump Sancho Panza busily arranging his harness for the next, no less ferocious. On another sits some less successful combatant, all his features screwed and twisted together, smarting under the lash of a sarcasm—or gazing blankly about him, imperfectly recovered from the stun of a retort; while perhaps some young beardless Esquire, burning for his spurs, may be discovered eyeing both of these askance, envious even of the cuts of the vanquished, and anxious, at all hazards, like Uriah the Hittite,

that some letter might reach the directors of the fray, saying, "Set ye this man in the front of the battle."

The elder and more employed advocates, to have done with my similitudes, seemed for the most part, when not actually engaged in pleading, to have the habit of seating themselves on the benches, which extend along the whole rear of their station. Here the veteran might be seen either poring over the materials of some future discussion, or contesting bitterly with some brother veteran the propriety of some late decision, or perhaps listening with sweet smiles to the talk of some uncovered Agent, whose hand in his fob seemed to give promise of a coming fee. The most of th younger ones seemed either to promenade with an air of utter *nonchalance*, or to collect into groups of four, five, or six, from whence the loud and husky cackle of some leading characters might be heard ever and anon rising triumphantly above the usual hum of the place. I could soon discover, that there are some half-dozen, perhaps, of professed wits and story-tellers, the droppings of whose inspiration are sufficient to attract round each of them, when he sets himself on his legs in the middle of the floor, a proper allowance of eyes and mouths to glisten and gape over the morning's budget of good things—some new eccentricity of Lord H——, or broad bon-mot of Mr. C——. The side of the Hall frequented by these worthies, is heated by two or three large iron stoves; and from the custom of lounging during the winter months in the immediate vicinity of these centres of comfort, the barristers of facetious disposition have been christened by one of their brethren, the "wits of the Stove-school." But, indeed, for aught I see, the journeyman-days of the whole of the young Scotch advocates might, with great propriety, be called by the simple collective—*Stove-hood.*

What has a more striking effect, however, than even the glee and merriment of these young people close at hand, is the sound of pleaders pleading at a distance, the music of whose elocution, heard separate from its meaning, is not, for the most part, such as to tempt a nearer approach. At one

Bar, the wig of the Judge is seen scarcely over-topping the mass of eager, bent-forward, listening admirers, assembled to do honour, to some favourite speaker of the day—their faces already arrayed in an appropriate smile, wherewith to welcome the expected joke—or fixed in the attitude of discernment and penetration, as if resolved that no link of his cunning chain of ratiocination should escape their scrutiny. At another extremity, the whole paraphernalia of the Judge's attire are exposed full to vision—all the benches around his tribunal deserted and tenantless, while some wearisome proser, to whom nobody listens except from necessity, is seen thumping the bar before him in all the agonies of unpartaken earnestness, his hoarse clamorous voice floating desolately into thin air, "like the voice of a man crying in the wilderness—whom no man heareth."

The appearance of the Judges, or Lords Ordinaries, themselves, next attracted my attention, and I walked round the hall to survey them, each in rotation, at his particular bar. Their dress is quite different from what we are accustomed to in our civil courts in England, and bears much more resemblance to what I have seen in the portraits of the old Presidents of the French Parliaments. Indeed I believe it is not widely different from this; for the Court of Session was originally formed upon the model of the Parliament of Paris, and its costume was borrowed from that illustrious court, as well as its constitution. The Judges have wigs somewhat different from those of the Advocates, and larger in dimension; but their gowns are very splendid things, being composed of purple-velvet and blue cloth and silk, with a great variety of knots and ornaments of all kinds. I could not see this vestment without much respect, when I reflected on the great number of men celebrated both for greatness and goodness that have worn it. It is the same gown in which the venerable Duncan Forbes of Culloden delivered judgment—in which Kaimes, and Hailes, and Braxfield, and Monboddo, and Woodhouselee—and later, perhaps greater than all, in which Blair was clothed. * * It struck me, that the

Judges in the Outer Court were rather younger men than we commonly see on the Bench in an English Court of Law; but their physiognomies, and the manner in which they seemed to be listening to the pleaders before them, were in general quite as I could have wished to see them. At one end sat Lord G——, brother to the excellent Historian of Greece, and Translator of Aristotle's Rhetorick and Ethics. He has at first sight an air of laziness about him, and seems as if he grudged the labour of lifting up his eyes to view the countenance of the person addressing him. But every now and then, he muttered some short question or remark, which showed abundantly that his intellect was awake to all the intricacies of the case; and I could see, that when the Advocates were done, he had no difficulty in separating the essence of the plea from all the adventitious matter with which their briefs had instructed them to clog and embarrass it. He has a countenance very expressive of acumen, and a pair of the finest black eyes I ever saw, although he commonly keeps them half-shrouded under their lids—and I have no doubt, from the mode in which he delivered himself, that he must have been a most accomplished debater when at the Bar. At the other extremity, the greatest stream of business seemed to rush in the direction of Lord P——'s tribunal. This Judge has the most delightful expression of suavity and patience in his look and manner, that I ever saw in any Judge, unless it be our own venerable old Chancellor Eldon. The calm conscientious way in which he seemed to listen to every thing that was said, the mild good-tempered smile with which he showed every now and then that he was not to be deceived by any subtilty or quirk, and the clear and distinct manner in which he explained the grounds of his decision, left me at no loss to account for the extraordinary pressure of business with which this excellent Judge appeared to be surrounded. Before these two Lords it was, that all the principal causes of the morning appeared to be argued. I happened to be standing close beside Lord P———'s Bar, when a pleading was going on for aliment of a natural child, at

the instance of a servant-wench against an Irish student, who had come to Edinburgh to attend the Medical Classes. The native of the Emerald Isle was personally present in rear of his Counsel, arrayed in a tarnished green great-coat, and muttering bitterly in his national accent. I heard him say to one near him, that he had been prevented from getting out of the way in proper time, by the harsh procedure of a grocer in Drummond Street, whose account was unpaid, and who had detained him by what he called a "meditatione fugæ warrant." The poor girl's case was set forth with great breadth of colouring and verity of detail by Mr. Clerk, (a fine sagacious-looking old gentleman, of whom I shall speak anon,) and the Bar was speedily surrounded by close ranks of listeners. Mr. Jeffrey, who was of counsel for the son of Erin, observed that the exceeding rapidity with which the crowd clustered itself around did not escape my attention, and whispered to me, that cases of this kind are always honoured with an especial allowance of such honour—being regarded as elegant *nugæ*, or tasteful relaxations from the drier routine of ordinary practice—somewhat like snatches of the Belles-Lettres in the midst of a course of hard reading. I could perceive, that even the grimmest and most morose-looking *Men of Business* would, in passing, endeavour to wedge their noses into the crowd, and after catching a few words of the pleading, would turn away grinning like satyrs, with the relish of what they had heard still mantling in their opaque imaginations. Jeffrey also told me, that Irish cases of the sort above-mentioned are extremely frequent even in the Scottish courts; and, indeed, the great Phillips himself seems never to enjoy the full command and swing of his powers, unless on the subject of a seduction; so that it may be said with truth of this wonderful man, and the gallant nation to which he belongs, that they mutually stand in much need of each other.

"'Tis well that they should sin, so he may shine."

P. M.

LETTER XXXI.

TO THE SAME.

DEAR WILLIAMS,

THE walls of this Outer House are in general quite bare; for the few old portraits hung here and there, are insufficient to produce any impression in the general view; but the Hall has lately received one very important ornament—namely, a statue of the late Lord Melville by Chantry, which has been placed on a pedestal of considerable elevation in the centre of the floor. As a piece of art, I cannot say that I consider this statue as at all equal to some others by the same masterly hand, which I have seen elsewhere. I am aware, however, that it is seen to very little advantage in the situation where it is placed; and, moreover, that no statue can be seen to its utmost advantage, when it is quite new from the chisel of the sculptor. It requires some time before the marble can be made to reconcile itself with the atmosphere around it; and while the surface continues to offend the eye by its first cold glare of chalky whiteness, it is not quite easy for an ordinary connoisseur to form a proper idea of the lines and forms set forth in this unharmonious material. Making allowance for all this, however, I can scarcely bring myself to imagine, that the statue of Melville will ever be thought to do honour to the genius of Chantry. There is some skill displayed in the management of the Viscount's robes; and in the face itself, there is a very considerable likeness of Lord Melville—which is enough, as your recollection must well assure you, to save it from any want of expressiveness. But the effect of the whole is, I think, very trivial, compared with what such an artist might have been expected to produce, when he had so fine a subject as Dundas to stimulate his energies. It is not often, now-a-days, that an artist can hope to meet with such a union of intellectual and corporeal grandeur, as were joined together in this Friend and Brother of William Pitt.

This statue has been erected entirely at the expense of the gentlemen of the Scottish Bar, and it is impossible not to admire and honour the feelings, which called forth from them such a magnificent mark of respect for the memory of their illustrious Brother. Lord Melville walked the boards of the Parliament House during no less than twenty years, before he began to reside constantly in London as Treasurer of the Navy; and during the whole of this period, his happy temper and manners, and friendly open-hearted disposition, rendered him a universal favourite among all that followed the same course of life. By all true Scotchmen, indeed, of whatever party in church or state, Melville was always regarded with an eye of kindliness and partiality. Whig and Tory agreed in loving him; and how could it be otherwise, for although nobody surely could be more firm in his political principles than he himself was, he allowed no feelings, arising out of these principles, to affect his behaviour in the intercourse of common life. He was always happy to drink his bottle of port with any worthy man of any party; and he was always happy to oblige personally those, in common with whom he had any recollections of good-humoured festivity. But the great course of his popularity was unquestionably nothing more than his intimate and most familiar acquaintance with the actual state of Scotland, and its inhabitants, and all their affairs. Here in Edinburgh, unless Mr. W—— exaggerates very much, there was no person of any consideration, whose whole connections and concerns were not perfectly well known to him. And I already begin to see enough of the structure of Scottish society, to appreciate somewhat of the advantages which this knowledge must have placed in the hands of so accomplished a statesman. The services which he had rendered to this part of the island were acknowledged by the greater part of those, who by no means approved of the general system of policy in which he had so great a share; and among the subscribers to his statue were very many, whose names no solicitation could have

brought to appear under any similar proposals with regard to any other Tory in the world.*

In the two Inner Houses, as they are called, (where causes are ultimately decided by the two great Divisions of the Court,) are placed statues of two of the most eminent persons that have ever presided over the administration of justice in Scotland. In the hall of the Second Division, behind the chair of the Lord Justice Clerk, who presides on that bench, is placed the statue of Duncan Forbes of Culloden; and in a similar situation, in the First Division, that of the Lord President Blair, who died only a few years ago. The statue of Culloden is by Roubilliac, and executed quite in his usual style as to its detail; but the earnest attitude of the Judge, stooping forward and extending his right hand, and the noble character of his physiognomy, are sufficient to redeem many of those defects which all must perceive. The other statue—that of Blair, is another work of Chantry, and I think, a vastly superior one to the Melville. The drapery, indeed, is very faulty—it is narrow and scanty, and appears to cling to the limbs like the wet tunic of the Venus Anadyomene. But nothing can be grander than the attitude and whole air of the figure. The Judge is not represented as leaning forward, and speaking with eagerness like Forbes, but as bending his head towards the ground, and folded in the utmost depth of quiet meditation; and this, I think, shows the conception of a much greater artist than the Frenchman. The head itself is one of the most superb things that either Nature or Art has produced in modern times. The forehead is totally bald, and shaped in a most heroic style of beauty—

* As one little trait, illustrative of Lord Melville's manner of conducting himself to the people of Scotland, I may mention, that to the latest period of his life, whenever he came to Edinburgh, he made a point of calling in person on all the old ladies with whom he had been acquainted in the days of his youth. He might be seen going about, and climbing up to the most aerial *habitacula* of ancient maidens and widows; and it is probable he gained more by this, than he could have gained by almost any other thing, even in the good opinion of people who might themselves be vainly desirous of having an interview with the great statesman.

the nose springs from its arch with the firmness and breadth of a genuine antique—the lips are drawn together and compressed in a way that gives the idea of intensest abstraction—and the whole head is such, that it might almost be placed upon the bust of Theseus, without offence to the majesty of that inimitable torso. The most wonderful circumstance is, that, unless all my friends be deceived, the statue, in all these points, is a most faithful copy of the original. Nor, to judge from the style in which the memory of the man is spoken of by all with whom I have conversed on the subject of his merits, am I inclined to doubt that it may have been so. He died very suddenly, and in the same week with Lord Melville, who had been through life his most dear and intimate friend; and the sensation produced all over Scotland by this two-fold calamity, is represented to have been one of the most impressive and awful things in the world. In regard to the best interests of the Scottish nation, perhaps the Judge might be even a greater loss than the Statesman; for there seems to be no reason to doubt, that he was cut off not far from the commencement of a judicial career, which, if it had been continued through such a space of time as the ordinary course of nature might have promised, would have done more for perfecting the structure of the Civil Jurisprudence of Scotland, than is likely to be accomplished under many successive generations of less extraordinary men. It would appear as if the whole of his clear and commanding intellect had been framed and tempered in such a way, as to qualify him peculiarly and expressly for being what the Stagyrite has finely called "a living Equity"—one of the happiest, and perhaps one of the rarest, of all the combinations of mental powers. By all men of all parties, the merits of this great man also were alike acknowledged, and his memory is at this moment alike had in reverence by them all. Even the keenest of his now surviving political opponents, himself one of the greatest lawyers that Scotland ever has produced, is said to have contemplated the supreme intellect of Blair with a feeling of respectfulness not much akin to the common cast of his dis-

position. After hearing the President overturn, without an effort, in the course of a few clear and short sentences, a whole mass of ingenious sophistry, which it had cost himself much labour to erect, and which appeared to be regarded as insurmountable by all the rest of his audience, this great Barrister is said to have sat for a few seconds, ruminating with much bitterness on the discomfiture of his cause, and then to have muttered between his teeth, "My man! God Almighty spared nae pains when he made your brains." Those that have seen Mr. Clerk, and know his peculiarities, appreciate the value of this compliment, and do not think the less of it because of its coarseness.

LETTER XXXII.

TO THE SAME.

I BELIEVE I repeated to you, at the close of my last letter, a remark of Mr. Clerk concerning President Blair. This Mr. Clerk is unquestionably, at the present time, the greatest man among those who derive their chief fame from their appearance at the Scottish Bar. His face and figure attracted my particular attention, before I had the least knowledge of his name, or suspicion of his surpassing celebrity. He has by some accident in infancy, been made lame in one of his limbs; but he has, notwithstanding, every appearance of great bodily vigour and activity.

I remember your instructions concerning the Barristers of Scotland, and after having visited their Courts with great assiduity, during the greater part of my stay in this place, shall now proceed to draw you portraits of the most eminent, as near as I can hit it, in the style you wish me to employ. I must begin with Mr. Clerk, for, by the unanimous consent of his brethren, and indeed of the whole of the profession, he is the present Coryphæus of the Bar—*Juris consultorum sui*

seculi facile princeps. Others there are that surpass him in a few particular points, both of learning and of practice; but, on the whole, his superiority is entirely unrivalled and undisputed. Those who approach the nearest to him, are indeed so much his juniors, that he cannot fail to have an immense ascendancy over them, both from the actual advantages of his longer study and experience, and, without offence to him or them be it added, from the effects of their early admiration of him, while he was as yet far above their sphere. Do not suppose, however, that I mean to represent any part of the respect with which these gentlemen treat their senior, as the result of empty prejudice. Never was any man less of a quack than Mr. Clerk; the very essence of his character is scorn of ornament, and utter loathing of affectation. He is the plainest, the shrewdest, and the most sarcastic of men; his sceptre owes the whole of its power to its weight—nothing to glitter.

It is impossible to imagine a physiognomy more expressive of the character of a great lawyer and barrister. The features are in themselves good—at least a painter would call them so; and the upper part of the profile has as fine lines as could be wished. But then, how the habits of the mind have stamped their traces on every part of the face! What sharpness, what razor-like sharpness, has indented itself about the wrinkles of his eye-lids; the eyes themselves so quick, so gray, such bafflers of scrutiny, such exquisite scrutinizers, how they change their expression—it seems almost, how they change their colour—shifting from contracted, concentrated blackness, through every shade of brown, blue, green, and hazel, back into their own open, gleaming gray again! How they glisten into a smile of disdain!—Aristotle says, that all laughter springs from emotions of conscious superiority. I never saw the Stagyrite so well illustrated, as in the smile of this gentleman. He seems to be affected with the most delightful and balmy feelings, by the contemplation of some soft-headed, prosing driveller, racking his poor brain, or bellowing his lungs out—all about something which he, the

smiler, sees through so thoroughly, so distinctly. Blunder follows blunder; the mist thickens about the brain of the bewildered hammerer; and every plunge of the bog-trotter—every deepening shade of his confusion—is attested by some more copious infusion of Sardonic suavity, into the horrible, ghastly, grinning smile of the happy Mr. Clerk. How he chuckles over the solemn *spoon* whom he hath fairly got into his power! When he rises, at the conclusion of his display, he seems to collect himself like a kite above a covey of partridges; he is in no hurry to come down, but holds his victims "with his glittering eye," and smiles sweetly, and yet more sweetly, the bitter assurance of their coming fate; then out he stretches his arm, as the kite may his wing, and changing the smile by degrees into a frown, and drawing down his eyebrows from their altitude among the wrinkles of his forehead, and making them to hang like fringes quite over his diminishing and brightening eyes, and mingling a tincture of deeper scorn in the wave of his lips, and projecting his chin, and suffusing his whole face with the very livery of wrath, how he pounces with a scream upon his prey—and, may the Lord have mercy upon their unhappy souls!——

He is so sure of himself, and he has the happy knack of seeming to be so sure of his case, that the least appearance of labour, or concern, or nicety of arrangement, or accuracy of expression, would take away from the imposing effect of his cool, careless, scornful, and determined negligence. Even the greatest of his opponents sit, as it were, rebuked before his gaze of intolerable derision. But careless and scornful as he is, what a display of skilfulness in the way of putting his statements; what command of intellect in the strength with which he deals the irresistible blows of his arguments—blows of all kinds, *fibers*, *cross-buttockers*, but most often and most delightedly sheer *facers—choppers*.—"*Ars est celare artem*," is his motto; or rather, "*Usus ipse natura est*;" for where was there ever such an instance of the certain sway of tact and experience? It is truly a delightful thing, to be a witness of this mighty intellectual gladiator, scattering every

thing before him, like a king, upon his old accustomed arena; with an eye swift as lightning to discover the unguarded point of his adversary, and a hand, steady as iron, to direct his weapon, and a mask of impenetrable stuff, that throws back, like a rock, the prying gaze that would dare to retaliate upon his own lynx-like penetration—what a champion is here! It is no wonder that every litigant in this covenanting land, should have learned to look on it as a mere tempting of Providence to omit retaining John Clerk.

As might be expected from a man of his standing in years and in talent, this great advocate disdains to speak any other than the language of his own country. I am not sure, indeed, but there may be some little tinge of affectation in this pertinacious adherence to both the words, and the music of his Doric dialect. However, as he has perfectly the appearance and manners of a gentleman, and even, every now and then, (*when it so likes him,*) something of the air of the courtier about him—there is an impression quite the reverse of vulgarity produced by the mode of his speaking; and, in this respect, he is certainly quite in a different situation from some of his younger brethren, who have not the excuse of age for the breadth of their utterance, nor, what is, perhaps, of greater importance, the same truly antique style in its breadth. Of this, indeed, I could not pretend to be a judge; but some of my friends assured me, that nothing could be more marked than the difference between the Scotch of those who learned it sixty years ago, and that of this younger generation. These last, they observed, have few opportunities of hearing Scotch spoken, but among servants, &c. so that there clings to all their own expressions, when they make use of the neglected dialect, a rich flavour of the hall, or the stable. Now, Mr. Clerk, who is a man of excellent family and fashion, spent all his early years among ladies and gentlemen, who spoke nothing whatever but Scotch; and even I could observe (or so, at least, I persuaded myself) that his language had a certain cast of elegance, even in the utmost breadth. But the truth is, that the matter of his orations is far too good to allow of

much attention being paid to its manner; and after a little time I scarcely remarked that he was speaking a dialect different from my own, excepting when, screwing his features into their utmost bitterness, or else relaxing them into their broadest glee, he launched forth some mysterious vernacularism of wrath or merriment, to the tenfold confusion or tenfold delight of those for whose use it was intended.

I had almost forgotten to mention, that this old barrister, who at the Bar has so much the air of having never thought of any thing but his profession, is, in fact, quite the reverse of a mere lawyer. Like old Voet, who used to be so much laughed at by the Leyden jurisconsults for his frequenting the town-hall in that city, (where there is, it seems, a very curious collection of paintings,) Mr. Clerk is a great connoisseur in pictures, and devotes to them a very considerable portion of his time. He is not a mere connoisseur, however, and, indeed, I suspect, carries as much true knowledge of the art in his little finger, as the whole reporting committee of the Dilettanti Society of Edinburgh do in their heads. The truth is, that he is himself a capital artist, and had he given himself entirely to the art he loves so well, would have been, I have little doubt, by far the greatest master Scotland ever has produced. I went one day, by mere accident, into my friend John Ballantyne's sale-room, at the moment when that most cunning of all tempters had in his hand a little pen and ink sketch by Mr. Clerk, drawn upon the outer page of a reclaiming petition—probably while some stupid opponent supposed himself to be uttering things highly worthy of Mr. Clerk's undivided attention. I bought the scrap for a mere trifle; but I assure you I value it very highly. I have shown it to Mrs. ——, and Tom ——, and several others of my friends, and they all agree it is quite a *bijou*. The subject is Bathsheba, with her foot in the water. The David is inimitable. Mr. Clerk is a mighty patron of artists, and has a splendid gallery of pictures in his own possession. But of it I shall perhaps have another opportunity of speaking. His rage for collecting, however, is by no means confined to pic-

tures. He has a stock of dogs, that would serve to keep the whole population of a Mahometan city in disgust, and a perfect menagerie of the genus Felinum. If one goes to consult him in his own chambers, I am told he is usually to be found sitting with a huge black Tom cat on his shoulder, (like the black Poodle of Albertus Magnus,) and surrounded in every direction with familiars of the same species, but of lesser dimensions—

—— "Spirits, black, white, and grey."

The great Tom, however, is the pet *par excellence;* and I am told, Mr. Clerk maintains a milch-cow exclusively or nominally for his use. Truly such a sanctuary, with such accompaniments, might, I think, form a subject not unworthy of his own masterly pencil.

Upon the whole, this gentleman at this moment holds a place in the public estimation, little, if any thing, inferior to the most celebrated men his country possesses even in this its age of wonders. That such eminence should be attained by a person of this profession in a country situated as Scotland is, forms at once a very high compliment to the profession itself, and the most unequivocal proof of the masterly and commanding power of the man's intellect. If I have ever seen any countenance which I should consider as the infallible index of originality and genius—such is the countenance of Mr. Clerk; and every thing he says and does is in perfect harmony with its language.

LETTER XXXIII.

TO THE SAME.

THERE cannot be a greater contrast between any two individuals of eminent acquirements, than there is between Mr. Clerk and the gentleman who ranks next to him at the Scot-

tish Bar—Mr. Cranstoun. They mutually set off each other to great advantage; they are rivals in nothing. Notwithstanding their total dissimilitude in almost every respect, they are well nigh equally admired by every one. I am much mistaken if any thing could furnish a more unequivocal testimony to the talents of them both.

It was my fortune to see Mr. Cranstoun for the first time, as he rose to make his reply to a fervid, masculine, homely harangue of my old favourite; and I was never less disposed to receive favourably the claims of a stranger upon my admiration. There was something, however, about the new speaker which would not permit me to refuse him my attention; although, I confess, I could scarcely bring myself to him with much *gusto* for several minutes. I felt, to use a simile in Mr. Clerk's own way, like a person whose eyes have been dazzled with some strong, rich, luxuriant piece of the Dutch or Flemish school, and who cannot taste, in immediate transition, the more pale, calm, correct gracefulness of an Italian Fresco; nevertheless, the eyes become cool as they gaze, and the mind is gradually yielded up to a less stimulant, but in the end a yet more captivating, and soothing species of seduction. The pensive and pallid countenance, every delicate line of which seemed to breathe the very spirit of compact thoughtfulness—the mild, contemplative blue eyes, with now and then a flash of irresistible fire in them—the lips so full of precision and tastefulness, not perhaps without a dash of fastidiousness in the compression of their curves—the gentle, easy, but firm and dignified air and attitude—every thing about him had its magic, and the charm was not long in winning me effectually into its circle. The stream of his discourse flowed on calmly and clearly; the voice itself was mellow, yet commanding; the pronunciation exact, but not pedantically so; the ideas rose gradually out of each other, and seemed to clothe themselves in the best and most accurate of phraseology, without the exertion of a single thought in its selection. The fascination was ere long complete; and, when he closed his speech,

it seemed to me as if I had never before witnessed any specimen of the true "melliflua majestas" of Quinctilian.

The only defect in his manner of speaking, (and it is, after all, by no means a constant defect,) is a certain appearance of coldness, which, I suspect, is nearly inseparable from so much accuracy. Mr. Cranstoun is a man of high birth and refined habits, and he has profited abundantly by all the means of education, which either his own, or the sister country can afford. His success in his profession was not early, (although never was any success so rapid, after it once had a beginning;) and he spent, therefore, many years of his manhood in the exquisite intellectual enjoyments of an elegant scholar, before he had either inclination or occasion to devote himself entirely to the more repulsive studies of the law. It is no wonder, then, that, in spite of his continual practice, and of his great natural eloquence, the impression of these delightful years should have become too deep ever to be concealed from view; and that even in the midst of the most brilliant displays of his forensic exertion, there should mingle something in his air, which reminds us, that there is still another sphere, wherein his spirit would be yet more perfectly at home. To me, I must confess, although I am aware that you will laugh at me for doing so, there was always present, while I listened to this accomplished speaker, a certain feeling of pain. I could scarcely help regretting, that he should have become a barrister at all. The lucid power of investigation—the depth of argument—the richness of illustration—all set forth and embalmed in such a strain of beautiful and unaffected language, appeared to me to be almost too precious for the purposes to which they were devoted —even although, in this their devotion, they were also ministering to my own delight. I could not help saying to myself, what a pity that he, who might have added a new name to the most splendid triumphs of his country—who might, perhaps, have been equal to any one as historian, philosopher, or statesman, should have been induced, in the early and unconscious diffidence of his genius, to give himself to a pro-

fession which can never afford any adequate remuneration either for the talents which he has devoted to its service, or the honour which he has conferred upon its name.

Having this feeling, I of course could not join in the regret which I heard expressed by all my friends in Edinburgh, in consequence of a prevailing rumour, that Mr. Cranstoun intends ere long to withdraw himself from the practice of his profession; and yet I most perfectly sympathise in the feelings of those, who, themselves compelled to adhere to those toils from which he is enabled to shake himself free, are sorry to witness the removal of one, who was sufficient of himself alone to shed an air of grace and dignity over the whole profession—and almost, as it were, over all that belong to it. Well, indeed, may they be excused for wishing to defer as long as possible the removal of such a brother. To use the old Greek proverb, which Pericles has applied on a more tragical, but not on a more fitting occasion—it is, indeed, "taking away the spring from their year."

In the retreat of Mr. Cranstoun, however, (should it really take place,) even these gentlemen, when they have leisure for a little more reflection, will probably see any thing rather than a cause of regret. The mind which possesses within itself so many sources of delightful exertion, can never be likely to sink into the wretchedness of indolence; and in whatever way its energies may be employed, there can be no question that good fruit, and lasting, will be the issue. Whether he return to those early pursuits in which he once promised to do so much, and of which, in the midst of his severer occupations, so many beautiful glimpses have from time to time escaped him; or whether he seek, in the retirement of his honourable ease, to reduce into an enduring form the product of his long assiduity in the study of his profession—whether he may prefer to take a high place in the literature, or the very highest in the jurisprudence of his country—all will acknowledge that he has "chosen a better part," than he could have ever obtained, by remaining in the dust and

fever of a profession, which must be almost as fatiguing to the body as it is to the mind.

LETTER XXXIV.

TO THE SAME.

I HAVE already described Mr. Jeffrey's appearance to you so often, that I need not say any thing in addition here, although it is in the Parliament House certainly that his features assume their most powerful expression, and that, upon the whole, the exterior of this remarkable man is seen to the greatest advantage. When not pleading in one or other of the Courts, or before the Ordinary, he may commonly be seen standing in some corner, entertaining or entertained by such wit as suits the atmosphere of the place; but it is seldom that his occupations permit him to remain long in any such position. Ever and anon his lively conversation is interrupted by some undertaker-faced Solicitor, or perhaps by some hot bustling Exquisite clerk, who comes to announce the opening of some new debate, at which the presence of Mr. Jeffrey is necessary; and away he darts like lightning to the indicated region, cleaving his way through the surrounding crowd with irresistible alacrity,—the more clumsy or more grave *doer* that had set him in motion, vainly puffing and elbowing to keep close in his wake. A few seconds have scarcely elapsed, till you hear the sharp, shrill, but deep-toned trumpet of his voice, lifting itself in some far off corner, high over the discordant Babel that intervenes—period following period in one unbroken chain of sound, as if its links had had no beginning, and were to have no end.

I have told you in a former letter, that his pronunciation is wretched—it is a mixture of provincial English, with undignified Scotch, altogether snappish and offensive, and which would be quite sufficient to render the elocution of a more or-

dinary man utterly disgusting; but the flow of his eloquence is so overpoweringly rapid, so unweariedly energetic, so entirely unlike every other man's mode of speaking, that the pronunciation of the particular words is quite lost to one's view, in the midst of that continual effort which is required, in order to make the understanding, even the ear of the listener, keep pace with the glowing velocity of the declamation. His words come more profusely than words ever came before, and yet it seems as if they were quite unable to follow, *passibus equis*, the still more amazing speed of his thought. You sit, while minute follows minute uncounted and unheeded, in a state of painful excitation, as if you were in a room overlighted with gas, or close under the crash of a whole pealing orchestra.

This astonishing fluency and vivacity, if possessed by a person of very inferior talents, might for a little be sufficient to create an illusion in his favour; and I have heard that such things have been. But the more you can overcome the effect of Mr. Jeffrey's dazzling rapidity, and concentrate your attention on the ideas embodied with such supernatural facility, the greater will be your admiration. It is impossible to conceive the existence of a more fertile, teeming intellect. The flood of his illustration seems to be at all times rioting up to the very brim—yet he commands and restrains it with equal strength and skill; or, if it does boil over for a moment, it spreads such a richness all around, that it is impossible to find fault with its extravagance. Surely never was such a luxuriant "copia fandi," united with so much terseness of thought, and brilliancy of imagination, and managed with so much unconscious, almost instinctive ease. If he be not the most delightful, he is certainly by far the most wonderful of speakers.

Like Cranstoun, this splendid rhetorician was many years at the Bar, before his success was at all proportioned to his talents. The reputation enjoyed by his Review, was both a friendly and a hostile thing to him as a barrister; for it excited universal attention to him whenever he made any ap-

pearance at the Bar, and yet it prevented many people from soliciting him to undertake the conduct of their cases, by inspiring a sort of fear, that his other, and more delightful, and better-rewarded pursuits, might perhaps prevent him from doing full justice to matters of every-day character—the paltry disputes of traders, and the mean tricks of attornies. All this, however, has been long since got over, and Jeffrey is now higher than almost any of his brethren, in his general character of an advocate, and decidedly above them all in more than one particular department of practice. The same powers which have enabled him to seize with so firm a grasp the opinion of the public, in regard to matters of taste and literature, give him, above all, sway unrivalled over the minds of a jury. There cannot be a finer display of ingenuity, than his mode of addressing a set of plain conscientious men, whom it is his business to bamboozle. He does not indeed call up, as some have dared to do, the majesty of sleeping passions, to overawe the trembling indecision of judgment. The magic he wields is not of the high cast, which makes the subject of its working the conscious, yet willing slave of the sorcerer. His is a more cunning, but quite as effectual a species of tempting. He flatters the vanity of men, by making them believe, that the best proof of their own superiority will be their coming to the conclusion which he has proposed; and they submit with servile stupidity, at the very moment that they are pluming themselves on displaying the boldness and independence of adventurous intellect. In criminal trials, and in the newly-established Jury Court for civil cases, Mr. Jeffrey is now completely lord of the ascendant; at least, he has only "one brother near the throne."

LETTER XXXV.

TO THE SAME.

THE three gentlemen whom I have already described to you, stand together, at a considerable elevation, above all the rest of their brethren, chiefly because they possess each of them a union of powers and talents, that must be sought for separately, (and may be found separately)—elsewhere. There are, indeed, no persons at present at the Scottish Bar, who can pretend to be quite so great lawyers as Mr. Clerk or Mr. Cranstoun, but there are some who come so near to them in this respect, that their inferiority would be much less observed or acknowledged, did they possess any of the extraordinary abilities in pleading displayed by those very remarkable men. And, in like manner, there are some others who speak so well, that they might easily take place with Mr. Cranstoun or Mr. Jeffrey, did they bring with them any measure of legal knowledge, which might sustain a comparison with that of the former, or were they capable of rivalling that intuitive keenness of intellect or of genius, which supplies, and more than supplies, the want of ordinary drudgery and ordinary information in the case of the latter.

There is one gentleman, however, whose inferiority of practice I am much at a loss to account for, because I understand that he is, if not a first-rate, certainly a very excellent lawyer, and I have myself seen and heard enough to be able to attest, that as a pleader, he is, in many respects, of the very first order of eminence. His practice, however, is also very considerable, and perhaps he is inferior in this respect to his rivals, only because it is impossible that more than three or four men should, at the same time, hold first-rate practice at this Bar. He seems to have been cast by Nature in the happiest of all possible moulds, for the ordinary routine of business, and withal to have received abundantly gifts that might qualify him for doing justice to many

of the highest and noblest functions, which one of his profession can ever be called upon to discharge. Nay, great and splendid and multifarious as are the faculties of the three wonderful men of whom I have spoken to you, there are some things in which they are each and all of them totally and manifestly deficient, and it so happens that those very things are to be found in perfection in this Mr. Henry Cockburn. This, however, is only adding to a difficulty, which, as I have already said, I find myself unable adequately to resolve.

It is, I think, a thousand pities that this gentleman should wear a wig in pleading; for when he throws off that incumbrance, and appears in his natural shape, nothing can be finer than the form of his head. He is quite bald, and his is one of those foreheads, which in spite of antiquity, are the better for wanting hair. Full of the lines of discernment and acumen immediately above the eye-brows, and over these again of the marks of imagination and wit, his skull rises highest of all in the region of veneration; and this structure, I apprehend, coincides exactly as it should do with the peculiarities of his mind and temperament. His face also is one of a very striking kind—pale and oval in its outline, having the nose perfectly aquiline, although not very large—the mouth rather wide, but, nevertheless, firm and full of meaning—the eyes beautifully shaped, in colour of a rich clear brown, and capable of conveying a greater range of expression than almost any I have seen. At first, one sees nothing (I mean when he wears his wig) but a countenance of great shrewdness, and a pair of eyes that seem to be as keen as those of a falcon; but it is delightful to observe, when he gets animated with the subject of his discourse, how this countenance vibrates into harmony with the feelings he would convey, and how these eyes, above all, lose every vestige of their sharpness of glance, and are made to soften into the broadest and sweetest smile of good humour, or kindle with bright beams, eloquent to overflowing of deepest sympathy in all the nobler and more mysterious workings of

the human heart. It is when these last kinds of expression reveal themselves, that one feels wherein Mr. Cockburn is superior to all his more celebrated rivals. Of all the great pleaders of the Scottish Bar, he is the only one who is capable of touching, with a bold and assured hand, the chords of feeling; who can, by one plain word and one plain look, convey the whole soul of tenderness, or appeal, with the authority of a true prophet, to a yet higher class of feelings, which slumber in many bosoms, but are dead, I think, in none.

As every truly pathetic speaker must be, Mr. Cockburn is a homely speaker; but he carries his homeliness to a length which I do not remember ever to have heard any other truly great speaker venture upon. He uses the Scottish dialect—always its music, and not unfrequently its words—quite as broadly as Mr. Clerk, and perhaps, at first hearing, with rather more vulgarity of effect—for he is a young man, and I have already hinted, that no young man can speak Scotch with the same impunity as an old one. Nevertheless, I am sure, no man who has witnessed the effect which Mr. Cockburn produces upon a Scottish Jury, would wish to see him alter any thing in his mode of addressing them. He is the best teller of a plain story I ever heard. He puts himself completely upon a level with those to whom he speaks; he enters into all the feelings with which ordinary persons are likely to listen to the first statement from a partial mouth, and endeavours, with all his might, to destroy the impression of distrustfulness, which he well knows he has to encounter. He utters no word which he is not perfectly certain his hearers understand, and he points out no inference before he has prepared the way for it, by making his hearers understand perfectly how he himself has been brought to adopt it. He puts himself in the place of his audience; an obvious rule, no doubt; but in practice, above all others, difficult, and which it requires the skill of a very master in the knowledge of human nature to follow with precision. Instead of labouring, as most orators do, to impress on the minds of his audience

a high notion of his own powers and attainments—this man seems to be anxious about nothing except to make them forget that he wears a gown, and to be satisfied that they are listening to a person who thinks, feels, and judges, exactly like themselves. He despises utterly the Ciceronian and Pindaric maxim.

Χρη θαμιζειν προσωπον τυλαυγες.

It is not his ambition to be admired: he wishes only to be trusted. He does not, by one word or gesture, show that he aspires to be reckoned a great man; but it is plain, he would give the world they should believe him to be an honest one. And after he has been allowed to tell his story in his own way, for ten minutes, I would defy Diogenes himself to doubt it.

His use of the language, and his still more exquisite use of the images and allusions of common Scottish life, must contribute in the most powerful manner to his success in this first great object of all his rhetoric. There is an air of broad and undisguised sincerity in the simple tones and energetic phrases he employs, which finds its way like a charm to the very bottom of the hearts around him. He sees it painted in their beaming and expanding faces, and sees, and knows, and feels at once, that his eloquence is persuasive. Once so far victorious, he is thenceforth irresistible. He has established an understanding between himself and his audience, a feeling of fellowship and confidence of communion, which nothing can disturb. The electricity of thought and of sentiment passes from his face to theirs, and thrills back again from theirs to his. He has fairly come into contact; he sees their breasts lie bare to his weapon, and he will make no thrust in vain.

I heard him address a jury the other day in behalf of a criminal, and never did I so much admire the infallible tact of his homely eloquence. In the first part of his speech, he made use of nothing but the most pedestrian language, and the jokes with which he interspersed his statement were fa-

miliar even to coarseness, although the quaintness of his humourous diction was more than enough to redeem that defect. Nothing could surpass the cunning skill with which he threw together circumstances apparently (and essentially) remote, in order to make out a feasible story for his culprit, and for a time it seemed as if he had succeeded in making the jury see every thing with such eyes as he had been pleased to give them. But when he came upon one fact, which even his ingenuity could not varnish, and which even their confidence could not be brought to pass over, there needed not a single word to let him see exactly in what situation he stood. He read their thoughts in their eyes, and turned the canvas with the touch of a magician. Instead of continuing to press upon their unwilling understandings, he threw himself at once upon the open hearts which he had gained. The whole expression of his physiognomy was changed in an instant, and a sympathetic change fell softly and darkly upon every face that was turned to him. His baffled ingenuity, his detected sophistry, all was forgotten in a moment. He had drawn more powerful arrows from his quiver, and he prepared to pierce with them whom he listed. His voice was no longer clear and distinct, but broken and trembling—his looks had lost its brightness, and his attitude its firmness—his lips quivered and his tongue faultered, and a large drop gathered slowly under his eye-lids, through which the swimming pupil shot faint and languid rays, that were more eloquent than words.

And yet his words, though they came slowly, and fell heavily, were far better than eloquent. The criminal had been the son of respectable parents—and he was yet young—and he had no hope but in their mercy; and well did his advocate know what topics to press on men that were themselves sons and fathers—and themselves conscious of weaknesses, and errors, and transgressions. It was now that I felt, in all its potency, the intense propriety of the native dialect, in which he chose to deliver himself. The feelings and sympathies which he wished to nourish—the reverend images which he wished to call up in aid of his failing argument—would have

appeared weak and dim in comparison, had they been set forth in any other than the same speech to whose music the ears around him had been taught to thrill in infancy. The operation of translating them into a less familiar tongue, would have chilled the fresh fervour of

> "Those common thoughts of Mother Earth,
> Her simplest thoughts, her simplest tears:"

He knew that "Man's heart is a holy thing," and had no fear of offending by the simplicity of the words in which he clothed his worship.

* * * * *

* * * * *

The person against whom Mr. Cockburn is most frequently pitched in the Jury Court for civil cases, is Mr. Jeffrey; and after what I have said of both, you will easily believe that it is a very delightful thing to witness the different means by which these two most accomplished speakers endeavour to attain the same ends. It is the wisest thing either of them can do, to keep as wide as possible from the track which nature has pointed out to the other, and both are in general so wise as to follow implicitly and exclusively her infallible direction. In the play of his wit, the luxuriance of his imagination, the beauty of his expression, Mr. Jeffrey is as much beyond his rival, as in the depth of his reasoning, and the general richness and commanding energy of his whole intellect. In a case where the reason of his hearers alone is concerned, he has faculties which enable him to seize from the beginning, and preserve to the end, a total and unquestioned superiority. There is no speaker in Britain that deals out his illustrations with so princely a profusion, or heaps upon every image and every thought, that springs from an indefatigable intellect, so lavish a garniture of most exquisite and most apposite language. There is no man who generalizes with a tact so masterly as Jeffrey; no multiplic[illegible] facts can distract or dazzle him for a moment; he has a clue that

brings him safe and triumphant out of every labyrinth, and he walks in the darkest recesses of his detail, with the air and the confidence of one that is sure of his conclusion, and sees it already bright before him, while every thing is Chaos and Erebus to his bewildered attendants. The delight which he communicates to his hearers, by the display of powers so extraordinary, is sufficient to make them rejoice in the confession of their own inferiority; careless of the point to which his steps are turned, they soon are satisfied to gaze upon his brightness, and be contented that such a star cannot lead them into darkness. A plain man, who for the first time is addressed by him, experiences a kind of sensation to which he has heretofore been totally a stranger. It is like the cutting off the cataract from a blind man's eye, when the first glorious deluge of light brings with it any thing rather than distinctness of vision. He has no leisure to think of the merits of the case before him; he is swallowed up in dumb overwhelming wonder of the miraculous vehicle, in which one side of it is expounded. The rapidity with which word follows word, and image follows image, and argument follows argument, keeps his intellect panting in vain to keep up with the stream, and gives him no time to speculate on the nature of the shores along which he is whirled, or the point towards which he is carried.

But when the object of all this breathless wonder has made an end of speaking, it is not to be doubted that a plain, sensible, and conscientious person, who knows that the sacred cau[redacted]ice is to be served or injured by the decision which he [redacted]nust give, may very naturally experience a very [redacted]den and a very uncomfortable revulsion of ideas. That [redacted]rust of h[redacted]hich had attended and grown upon him all the w[redacted]istened, may now perhaps give way, in no inconsider[redacted]easure, to distrust of the orator, whose winged words are [redacted]ingin[redacted]his aching ears. The swiftness of the career has been suc[redacted] that he cannot, on reflection, gather any th[redacted] more than a very vague and unsatisfactory idea of the pa[redacted]ular steps of his progress, and it is no wonder that

he should pause a little before he decide with himself, that there is no safer and surer issue to which he might have been conducted in some less brilliant vehicle, and with some less extraordinary degree of speed. Nor can any thing be more likely to affect the mind of a person pausing and hesitating in this way, with a delightful feeling of refreshment and security, than the simple, leisurely, and unostentatious manner in which such a speaker as Mr. Cockburn may commence an address which has for its object to produce a quite opposite impression. When he sees a face so full of apparent candour and simplicity, and hears accents of so homely a character, and is allowed time to ponder over every particular statement as it is made, and consider with himself how it hinges upon that which has preceded, before he is called upon to connect it with something that is to follow—it is no wonder that he should feel as if he had returned to his own home after a flight in a parachute, and open himself to the new rhetorician with something of the reposing confidence due to an old and tried associate and adviser.

As for causes in the Criminal Court, wherein mere argument is not all that is necessary, or such causes in the Jury Court as give occasion for any appeal to the feelings and affections—I fancy, there are few who have heard both of them that would not assign the palm to Mr. Cockburn without the smallest hesitation. Whether from the natural constitution of Mr. Jeffrey's mind, or from the exercises and habits in which he has trained and established its energies, it would seem as if he had himself little sympathy for the more simple and unadorned workings of the affections; and accordingly he has, and deserves to have, little success, when he attempts to command and controul those workings for purposes immediately his own. I have never seen any master genius fail so miserably in any attempt, as he does whenever he strives to produce a pathetic effect by his eloquence. It is seen and felt in a moment, that he is wandering from his own wide and fertile field of dominion, and every heart which he would invade, repells him with coldness. It is not by an artificial

piling together of beautiful words, and beautiful images, that one can awe into subjection the rebellious pride of man's bosom. It is not by such dazzling spells as these, that a speaker or a writer can smite the rock, and

"Wake the sacred source of sympathetic tears."

Mr. Jeffrey is the Prince of Rhetoricians; but Mr. Cockburn, in every other respect greatly his inferior, is more fortunate here. He is an Orator, and the passions are the legitimate and willing subjects of his deeper sway. As the Stagyrite would have expressed it, he has both the πιστις ηθικη and the πιστις παθητικη but Mr. Jeffrey has no pretensions to the possession of either.

P. M.

LETTER XXXVI.

TO THE SAME.

Far inferior to Mr. Cockburn, or to any of the three gentlemen I first described, as a speaker,—but far above Mr. Cockburn, and far above Mr. Jeffrey, as a lawyer, is Mr. James Moncrieff, without all doubt at this moment the most rising man at the Scottish Bar. This gentleman is son to Sir H[illegible] Moncrieff, a well-known leader of the Scottish Chu[illegible] whom I shall, perhaps, have occasion to speak at length hereafter. He has a countenance full of the expression of q[illegible]ightedness and logical power, and his voice and manner [illegible]delivering himself, are such as to add much to this the natural language of his countenance. He speaks in a firm, h[illegible] tone, and his phraseology aspires to no merit beyond that of closeness and precision. And yet, although entirely without display of imagination, and although apparently scornful to excess of every merely ornamental part of the

rhetorical art, it is singular that Mr. Moncrieff should be not only a fervid and animated speaker, but infinitely more keen and fervid throughout the whole tenor of his discourse, and more given to assist his words by violence of gesture, than any of the more imaginative speakers whom I have already endeavoured to describe. When he addresses a jury, he does not seem ever to think of attacking their feelings; but he is determined and resolved, that he will omit no exertion which may enable him to get the command over their reason. He plants himself before them in an attitude of open defiance; he takes it for granted that they are against him; and he must, and will, subdue them to his power. Wherever there is room to lay a finger, he fixes a grappling-iron, and continues to tear and tug at every thing that opposes him, till the most stubborn and obstinate incredulity is glad to purchase repose by assenting to all he demands. It cannot be said, that there is much pleasure to be had from listening to this pleader; but it is always an inspiriting thing to witness the exertion of great energies, and no man who is fond of excitement will complain of his entertainment. His choleric demeanour gives a zest to the dryness of the discussions in which he is commonly to be found engaged. His unmusical voice has so much nerve and vigour in its discords, that after hearing it on several occasions, I began to relish the grating effect it produces upon the tympanum—as a child gets fond of pepper-corns, after two or three burnings of its mouth. And as acquired tastes are usually more strong than natural ones, I am not disposed to wonder that Mr. Moncrieff should have some admirers among the constant attendants upon the Scottish courts, who think him by far the most agreeable speaker of all that address them. They may say of him, as my friend Charles Lloyd says of tobacco,

> "Roses—violets—but toys
> For the smaller sort of boys—
> Or for greener damsels meant—
> Thou art the only manly scent."

It is not, however, as a speaker, that Mr. Moncrieff has his greatest game before him. Mr. Clerk has past his grand climacteric; and unless universal rumour say falsely, Mr. Cranstoun is about to retire. There is no question, whenever either of these leaders is removed, his baton of command must come into the strenuous grasp of Mr. Moncrieff. Already he is a great and profound lawyer, so far as knowledge is concerned, and the natural energy of his intellect will by every-day's practice increase its power of throwing new light upon what is known to himself and to others. Moreover, in these Scottish Courts, a very great proportion of the most important pleadings are carried on in writing—a department in which Mr. Moncrieff has few rivals at present, and in all probability will, ere long, have none. For it is not to be supposed, that either Mr. Jeffrey or Mr. Cockburn, or any other barrister who possesses the more popular and fascinating kinds of elocution, will ever choose to interfere, to any considerable extent, with a style of practice so much more laborious. It is quite evident, that Mr. Moncrieff is within sight of the very summit of his profession; and it does not seem as if there were any one lower down the hill, who might be likely, by any bold and sudden movement, to reach the post of honour before him.

Another speaker of considerable note is Mr. Murray, the same gentleman of whom I spoke as presiding at the Burns's Dinner last month. This barrister is in some respects so very near the point of excellence, that the first time one hears him, one cannot help wondering that he should not be more talked of than he is. Of all his brother advocates, with the single exception of Mr. Cranstoun, he has the most courtly presence and demeanour. His features are good, although not striking; his smile has something very agreeable in it; and his gestures are as elegant as Mr. Cranstoun's, and infinitely more easy. When he gets upon a sarcastic key, he keeps dallying with it in a very light, loving, and graceful manner, and is altogether very much calculated for delighting any popular audience in an ordinary case. As pleasantry, how-

ever, is his chief forte, it cannot be expected that he should attain through that alone to the first-rate eminence of favour and reputation, so long as he has to enter the lists with the far more pure and classical wit of Mr. Cranstoun, the more copious and brilliant wit of Mr. Jeffrey, and the more effectual, irresistible, sheer humour of Mr. Clerk or Mr. Cockburn. As for pathos, I hope he will never attempt it; if he does adventure upon such an Icarian flight, it will certainly be, like his prototype, *mox daturus nomina ponto.*

These are all that are ever in the present time talked of as great speakers at the Scottish Bar. At whatever corner of the Parliament-House you may happen to take your stand, you are almost sure to be within hearing of one or other of them, or within the rush of listeners setting in towards the quarter where one or other of them is expected shortly to make his appearance. There are several, however, who would very fain be supposed to belong to the same class with these, and some, no doubt, who may hereafter belong to it. Among the former, conspicuous and loud, I found my old acquaintance, Mr. J. P. Grant, for he has deserted Westminster-Hall, and resumed of late the advocate's gown he had worn here in the days of his youth; chiefly, I am told, with an eye to the new Jury Court in civil causes, where he expected his English practice would be of great service to him. I do not discover, however, that his return to the Edinburgh Bar has borne much resemblance either

> "To a re-appearing star,
> Or a glory from afar."

His extravagant vehemence of gesture, and his foaming cataract of words, seem to be regarded with rather a mortifying kind of indifference by the Juries; and as for the Judges, nothing can be less likely to prove effective in demolishing their quiet and resolute defensiveness, than that incessant crash of ill-directed artillery which is levelled against them by Mr. Grant. He quite mis-calculates his elevation; there is a most mistaken curve in his parabolas; and the shot of this noisy

engineer are all spent before they reach the point at which they are aimed. In short, Mr. Grant is by no means listened to here in Edinburgh with the same attention which he is used to receive from the House of Commons; so that the rule about lawyers making bad speakers in Parliament may be considered as exactly contradicted in this instance. Not that Mr. Grant is a good speaker even in Parliament, but there he certainly is a useful one, and apparently an acceptable one. It would be too much for poor human nature to meet with equal success in every thing. But although I am no admirer of Mr. Grant's eloquence, I assure you I was very glad to meet once more with an old acquaintance, for whose character, as a gentleman, no one can have a higher respect, and for whose good company over a bottle of good claret, nobody can have a more sincere relish than myself. I spent a very pleasant evening with him yesterday at Mr. J——'s, where we talked over a thousand old Temple stories, and were as happy as kings. He used to be continually about poor Tom Harris's Chambers, when he lived in Fig-tree Court—I won't say how many years ago.

P. M.

LETTER XXXVII.

TO THE SAME.

There is another class of Lawyers, however, who have no ambition of rivalling the Cranstouns and the Jeffreys—who walk in a totally different course from them—and attain in their own walk, if not to an equally splendid, certainly to an almost as lucrative species of reputation. These are the class of your plain, thorough-going, jog-trot Lawyers, who are seldom employed in cases of the very highest importance, but whose sober, regular, business-like manner of doing every thing that is entrusted to them, procures for them an even,

uninterrupted, unvarying life of well-paid labour. It is upon these men that the ordinary run of your common-place litigation scatters its constantly refreshing, but seldom brightening dew. The lungs of these men are employed, for a certain number of hours every morning, in pleading, and every evening in dictating. With them, the intellectual mill-horse never stops a moment in his narrow round, unless it be to allow time for eating, drinking, and sleeping. The natural attitude of these men, is that of labouring at a side-bar. Their heads do not feel comfortable when their wigs are off. If they call for a glass of ale during dinner, they astound the lackey with a big phrase from the Style-book. If you carry one of them into the midst of the most magnificent scenery of nature, his thoughts will still tarry behind him within the narrow and dusty precincts of the Parliament-House of Edinburgh. You shall see him pluck a *Condescendence* from his pocket, and con over its sprawling pages, although the grandest of mountains be behind, and the most beautiful of lakes before him.

> "Bear witness, many a pensive sigh
> Of thoughtful ——— when he strays
> Alone upon Loch Veol's heights,
> Or by Loch Lomond's braes."

These are the true plodders of the profession—nothing can be more genuine than their obscure devotion—"they and the other slaves of the Lamp!"

During one of my earliest visits to the Parliament-House, when I was picking up from various quarters the first rudiments of that information which I have now been retailing for your benefit, an elderly lawyer, by name Mr. Forsyth, was pointed out to me, I forget by whom, as standing at the head of this class. On talking over these matters with my friend Mr. W——, however, I found reason to doubt whether this person might not be well entitled to take his place among those of a higher order, and the result of my own subsequent observation and diligent attendance on these Courts of Jus-

tice, has certainly been to confirm me in this notion of the matter. There is, indeed, something so very singular and characteristic in the whole appearance of Mr. Forsyth, that, even at first sight, I should scarcely have been persuaded, without some difficulty, to set him down as a mere ordinary drudge of his profession. I am so deeply imbued with the prejudices of a physiognomist and a craniologist, that I could not be easily brought to think there was nothing extraordinary in one on whom nature had stamped so very peculiar a signet.

I have never seen a countenance that combined, in such a strange manner, originality of expression with features of common-place formation. His forehead is indeed massy and square, so far as it is seen; but his wig comes so low down, as to conceal about the whole of its structure. His nose is large and firm, but shaped without the least approach to one beautiful line. His mouth is of the widest, and rudely-fashioned; but whether he closes it entirely, or, what is more common, holds it slightly open with a little twist to the left, it is impossible to mistake its intense sagacity of expression, for the common-place archness of a mere practised dealer in litigation. His cheeks are ponderous, and look as if they had been cast in brass, and his chin projects with an irresistible air of ungullibility. But the whole of this would be nothing without his eyes. The one of these is black as jet, and looks out clearly from among a tangled and ever-twinkling web of wrinkles. The other is light in hue, and glimmers through a large and watery surface, contracted by no wrinkles—(the lids on that side being large, smooth, and oily)—generally in a direction as opposite as possible from that which its more vivacious neighbour happens to be following for the moment. It has not, however, the appearance of being blind, to one who views it disconnected from the other, and nothing, indeed, can be more striking than the total difference of effect which the countenance produces, according as it is viewed in sinistral or in dextral profile. On the one side, you have the large, glazed, grey eye, reflecting an air of unutterable inno-

cence and suavity on all the features it seems to be illuminating. On the other, you have the small black iris, tipped in the centre with an unquenchable dazzling flame, and throwing on every thing above and below it a lustre of acumen, that Argus might have been proud to rival with all his ubiquity of glances. Such a face as this was never meant to be the index of any common mind. "Nihil inutile, nihil vanum, nihil supervacaneum in Naturâ," as the Prince of English intellect has well expressed it.

My friend W—— informs me, that the history of this gentleman has been no less peculiar than is his physiognomy. In his youth he was destined for the Kirk, and proceeded so far in that way as to be dubbed a licentiate, or preacher, which is the nearest approach in the Scottish Church to our deacon's orders. But—from causes, it is probable, of no uncommon nature—he soon became disgusted with the idea of the Presbyterian career, and determined to become an Advocate. In those days, however, that was not quite so easy a matter of attainment as it has since come to be. The Advocates at that time were accustomed to exercise a discretionary right, of excluding from their Faculty whomsoever they chose to consider as unfit to enter—not merely on the score of learning or talent, (for, in regard to these, the pretence still lingers)—but, if it so pleased their fancy, on the score of want of birth, or status in society—a notion, the revival of which, if attempted now-a-days, would probably be scouted by a very triumphant majority of their body. What Mr. Forsyth's birth might be, I know not; but so it was, that the admission of the young licentiate, against whose character no one could say one word, was opposed most stiffly in the Faculty meetings, and he did not succeed in his object till after repeated applications had testified the firmness of his purpose, and time had produced its proper effect, in making his opponents ashamed of contradicting it.

He became an Advocate, therefore; and, by degrees, the same inflexible pertinacity of will which had procured his admission into the Faculty, elevated him to a considerable share

of practice. Without making any one appearance that could ever be called splendid, and in the teeth of a great number of men that did make such appearances, Mr. Forsyth was resolved that he should make a fortune at the Bar, and that was enough. From day to day, and from hour to hour, he was at his post. He came to the Court earlier than any one else, and he staid there later. His sagacious countenance was never amissing; and they who saw that countenance perpetually before them, could not fail to read its meaning. Other men laboured by fits and starts, and always with a view to some particular and immediate object of ambition; this man laboured continually, because it was his principle and his belief that he could not be happy without labouring, and because he knew and felt that it was impossible a man of his talents should labour long without being appreciated and rewarded in the end.

If he had no brief, he did not care for that want, or allow himself to take advantage of any pretence for idleness. His strong intellect could no more do without work, than his robust body could subsist without food. If he had not enough to occupy him in the affairs of individual men, he had always the species, and its concerns, on which to exercise his strength. And at a time when nobody suspected him of possessing either ambition or ability for any thing more than the drudgery of his profession, he published a book on the Principles of Moral Science, coarse indeed in many of its conceptions, and coarse in its language, but overflowing everywhere with the marks of most intense observation, and most masculine originality. From this time, the stamp of his intellect was ascertained, and those who had been most accustomed to speak slightingly of him, found themselves compelled to confess his power.

His natural want of high eloquence has prevented him from being the rival of the great lawyers I have described, in their finest field; and a certain impatience of all ornament, has prevented him from rivalling them in writing. Neither, as I am informed, has he ever been able to penetrate into the depths

of legal arguments with the same clear felicity which some of those remarkable men have displayed. But he has been willing to task the vigour of an Herculean understanding to a species of work which these men would have thought themselves entitled to despise, and to slur over, if it did come into their hands, with comparative inattention; and it is thus that his fortune has been made. He cannot do what some of his brethren can do; but whatever he can do, he will do. While they reserve the full exertion of their fine energies for occasions that catch their fancy, and promise opportunity of extraordinary display, he allows his fancy to have nothing to say in the matter; and display is a thing of which he never dreams. He has not the magical sword that will shiver steel, nor the magical shield that will dazzle an advancing foe into blindness; but he is clothed *cap-a-pee* in harness of proof, and he has his mace always in his hand. He is contented to be ranged with the ordinary class of champions; but they who meet him, feel that his vigour might well entitle him to exchange thrusts with their superiors.

It would surely argue a very strange degree of obstinacy, to deny that all this speaks of an intellect of no ordinary cast. There is no walk of exertion which may not be dignified; and I imagine it is not often that such a walk as that of Mr. Forsyth has found such an intellect as his willing to adorn it.

* * * * *

* * * * *

There are still several of the Scottish Advocates whom I ought to describe to you; but I reserve them, and their peculiarities, for matter of oral communication. My object was, in the mean time, to give you some general notion of those who at present make the most conspicuous figure among an order of men whose name is familiar to you, and celebrated everywhere, but of which very little is, in general, known accurately by such as have not personally visited the scene of their exertions. I suppose I have already said enough to

convince you that the high reputation enjoyed by the Scottish jurisconsults is far from being an unmerited reputation; and that, taking the size and population of the country into view, Scotland has at least as much reason to be proud of her Bar as any country in Europe.

* * * * *

* * * * *

P. M.

LETTER XXXVIII.

TO THE SAME.

TILL within these few years, it was the custom for the whole of the Judges of whom the Court of Session is composed, to sit together upon the same bench, and Scottish litigants had thus the advantage of submitting their causes to the joint decision of a much greater number of arbiters than those of England ever had to do with. The enormous increase of litigation, however, which resulted from the extended population, and, above all from the extended commerce of Scotland, joined, perhaps, with sufficient experience that this multitude of counsellors brought disadvantages, as well as advantages, along with it, gave rise to a separation of the Civil Court into two divisions, each of which now exercises the full powers formerly vested in the whole body; the Lord President of the Session retaining his place as President of the First, and the Lord Justice-Clerk, (who acts also, as his title denotes, as head of the Criminal Court,) being President of the Second of these Divisions. From all that I can hear, this arrangement has been productive of the happiest effects; an infinitely greater quantity of business being of course discussed, and no business whatever being less thoroughly, or less satisfactorily discussed, than when

each individual case was at once, as the popular phrase ran, "*ta'en before the Fifeteen.*"

The nature of the causes with which these two courts have been chiefly occupied since I began to attend their sittings, has been such, that although I have had great amusement in hearing the particular sides of many questions set forth to the best advantage, by the ingenuity of the particular pleaders, there has been much less to amuse me, a stranger to the technicalities of the Scottish law, in the more concise and more abstruse disquisitions wherein the several Judges have delivered their opinions concerning the legal merits of the arguments employed in my hearing. The external appearance of the Courts, however, is abundantly dignified and impressive; and, without being able to understand most of what was delivered from the Bench, I have heard more than enough to satisfy me that there is no want of talent in the Judges who take the principal direction and conduct of the business brought before them. The President of the Second Division, in particular, seems to be possessed of all the discernment and diligence which it is pleasing to see a Judge display; and he possesses, moreover, all that dignity of presence and demeanour, which is scarcely less necessary, and which is infinitely more rare, in those to whom the high duties of such stations are entrusted. In his other Court, (the Criminal, or Justiciary Court, of which also I have witnessed several sittings,) I could better understand what was going forward, and better appreciate the qualities by which this eminent Judge is universally acknowledged to confer honour upon his function.

In his Division of the Civil Court, one of his most respected assessors is Lord Robertson, son to the great historian; nor could I see, without a very peculiar interest, the son of such a man occupying and adorning such a situation, in the midst of a people in whose minds his name must be associated with so many feelings of gratitude and admiration. It is perhaps the finest and most precious of all the rewards which a man of virtue and genius receives, from the nation to whose ser-

vice his virtue and his genius have ministered, that he establishes for his children a true and lofty species of nobility in the eyes of that people, and secures for all *their* exertions, (however these may differ in species from his own,) a watchful and a partial attention from generations long subsequent to that on which the first and immediate lustre of his own reputation and his own presence may have been reflected. The truth is, that a great national author connects himself for ever with all the better part of his nation, by the ties of an intellectual kinsmanship—ties which, in his own age, are scarcely less powerful than those of the kinsmanship of blood, and which, instead of evaporating and being forgotten in the course of a few generations, as the bonds of blood must inevitably be, are only rivetted the faster by every year that passes over them. It is not possible to imagine that any lineal descendant of Shakspeare, or Milton, or Locke, or Clarendon, or any one of the great authors of England, should have borne, in the present day, the name of his illustrious progenitor, and seen himself, and his great name, treated with neglect by his countrymen. The son of such a man as the Historian of Scotland, is well entitled to share in these honourable feelings of hereditary attachment among the people of Scotland;—and he does share in them. Even to me, I must confess it afforded a very genuine delight, to be allowed to contemplate the features of the father, as reflected and preserved in the living features of his son. A more careless observer would not, perhaps, be able to trace any very striking resemblance between the face of Lord Robertson and the common portraits of the historian; but I could easily do so. In those of the prints which represent him at an early period of his life, the physiognomy of Robertson is not seen to its best advantage. There is, indeed, an air of calmness and tastefulness even in them, which cannot be overlooked or mistaken; but it is in those later portraits, which give the features, after they had been devested of their fulness and smoothness of outline, and filled with the deeper lines of age and comparative extenuation, that one traces, with most ease and

satisfaction, the image of genius, and the impress of reflection. And it is to those last portraits that I could perceive the strongest likeness in the general aspect of the Judge—but, most of all, in his grey and over-hanging eye-brows, and eyes, eloquent equally of sagacity of intellect, and gentleness of temper.

In the other Division of the Court, I yesterday heard, without exception, the finest piece of judicial eloquence delivered in the finest possible way by the Lord President Hope. The requisites for this kind of eloquence are of course totally different from those of accomplished barristership—and I think they are in the present clever age infinitely more uncommon. When possessed in the degree of perfection in which this Judge possesses them, they are calculated assuredly to produce a yet nobler species of effect, than even the finest display of the eloquence of the Bar ever can command. They produce this effect the more powerfully, because there are comparatively very few occasions on which they can be called upon to attempt producing it; but besides this adventitious circumstance, they are essentially higher in their quality, and the feelings which they excite are proportionally deeper in their whole character and complexion.

I confess I was struck with the whole scene, the more because I had not heard any thing which might have prepared me to expect a scene of so much interest, or a display of so much power. But it is impossible, that the presence and air of any Judge should grace the judgment-seat more than those of the Lord President did upon this occasion. When I entered, the Court was completely crowded in every part of its area and galleries, and even the avenues and steps of the Bench were covered with persons who could not find accommodation for sitting. I looked to the Bar, naturally expecting to see it filled with some of the most favourite Advocates; but was astonished to perceive, that not one gentleman in a gown was there, and, indeed, that the whole of the first row, commonly occupied by the barristers, was entirely deserted. An air of intense expectation, notwithstanding, was stamped upon all

the innumerable faces around me, and from the direction in which most of them were turned, I soon gathered that the eloquence they had come to hear, was to proceed from the Bench. The Judges, when I looked towards them, had none of those huge piles of papers before them, with which their desk is usually covered in all its breadth, and in all its length. Neither did they appear to be occupied among themselves with arranging the order or substance of opinions about to be delivered. Each Judge sat in silence, wrapt up in himself, but calm, and with the air of sharing in the general expectation of the audience, rather than that of meditating on any thing which he himself might be about to utter. In the countenance of the President alone, I fancied I could perceive the workings of anxious thought. He leaned back in his chair; his eyes were cast downwards; and his face seemed to be covered with a deadly paleness, which I had never before seen its masculine and commanding lines exhibit.

At length he lifted up his eyes, and at a signal from his hand, a man clad respectably in black rose from the second row of seats behind the Bar. I could not at first see his face; but from his air, I perceived at once that he was there in the capacity of an offender. A minute or more elapsed before a word was said, and I heard it whispered behind me, that he was a well-known solicitor or agent of the Court, who had been detected in some piece of mean chicanery, and I comprehended that the President was about to rebuke him for his transgression. A painful struggle of feelings seemed to keep the Judge silent, after he had put himself into the attitude of speaking, and the silence in the Court was as profound as midnight—but at last, after one or two ineffectual attempts, he seemed to subdue his feelings by one strong effort, and he named the man before him in a tone, that made my pulse quiver, and every cheek around me grow pale.

Another pause followed—and then, all at once, the face of the Judge became flushed all over with crimson, and he began to roll out the sentences of his rebuke with a fervour of indignation, that made me wonder by what emotions the tor-

rent could have been so long withheld from flowing. His voice is the most hollow and sonorous I ever heard, and its grave wrath filled the whole circuit of the walls around, thrilling and piercing every nerve of every ear, like the near echo of an earthquake. The trumpet-note of an organ does not peal through the vaults of a cathedral with half so deep a majesty; and I thought within myself that the offence must indeed be great, which could deserve to call down upon any head, such a palsying sweep of terrors. It is impossible I should convey to you any idea of the power of this awful voice; but, never till I myself heard it, did I appreciate the just meaning of Dante, where he says, "*Even in the wilderness, the Lion will tremble, if he hears the voice of a just Man.*"

Had either the sentiments or the language of the Judge been other than worthy of such a vehicle, there is no question that the effect of its natural potency would soon have passed away. But what sentiments can be more worthy of borrowing energy from the grandest music of Nature, than those with which an upright and generous soul contemplates, from its elevation of purity, the black and loathsome mazes of the tangled web of deceit? The paltry caitiff that stood before him, must have felt himself too much honoured, in attracting even indignation from one so far above his miserable sphere. With such feelings, and such a voice, it was impossible that the rebuke he uttered should not have been an eloquent rebuke. But even the language in which the rebuke was clothed, would have been enough, of itself alone, to beat into atoms the last lingering reed of self-complacency, on which detected meanness might have endeavoured to prop up the hour and agony of its humiliation. *Mens est id quod facit disertum;* and whatever harrowing words the haughtiness of insulted virtue, the scorn of honour, the coldness of disdain, the bitterness of pity might supply, came ready as flashes from a bursting thunder-cloud, to scatter ten-fold dismay upon this poor wretch, and make his flesh and his spirit creep chill within him like a bruised adder. His coward eye was fascinated by the glance that killed him, and he durst not look

for a moment from the face of his chastiser. He did look for a moment; at one terrible word he looked wildly round, as if to seek for some whisper of protection, or some den of shelter. But he found none. And even after the rebuke was at an end, he stood like the statue of Fear, frozen in the same attitude of immoveable desertedness.

* * * *

This Judge was formerly President of the Criminal Court; and after being present at this scene, I have no difficulty in believing what I hear from every one, that, in pronouncing sentence, he far surpassed every Judge whom the present time has witnessed, or of whom any memory survives. Had any gone before him, his equal in the "terrible graces" of judicial eloquence, it is not possible that he should soon have been forgotten. Feelings such as this man possesses, when expressed as he expresses them, produce an effect, of which it is not easy to say whether the impression may be likely to abide longest in the bosoms of the good, or in those of the wicked.

As I came away through the crowd, I heard a pale, anxious looking old man, who, I doubt not, had a cause in Court, whisper to himself—"God be thanked—there's one true GENTLEMAN at the head of them all."

* * * * *

* * * * *

P. M.

LETTER XXXIX.

TO THE SAME.

I HAVE endeavoured to give you some notion of the present state of the Bar and Bench of Scotland—and I have done

so, it may be, at greater length than you were prepared to expect. The individuals whom I have pourtrayed, are all, however, men of strong and peculiar intellectual conformation; and therefore, without taking their station or functions into view, they cannot be unworthy of detaining, as individuals, some considerable portion of a traveller's attention. In our age, when so much oil is poured upon the whole surface of the ocean of life, that one's eye can, for the most part, see nothing but the smoothness and the flatness of uniformity, it is a most refreshing thing to come upon some sequestered bay, where the breakers still gambol along the sands, and leap up against the rocks as they used to do. I fear that ere long such luxury will be rarer even in Scotland than it now is; and, indeed, from all I hear, nothing can be more distinct and remarkable than the decrease in the *quantum* of it, which has occurred within the memory even of persons of my own time of life. The peculiarities, which appear to me so strong and singular in the present worthies of the Parliament-House, are treated with infinite disdain by my friend W——, for example, who ridicules them as being only the last feeble gleanings of a field, which he himself remembers to have seen bending beneath the load of its original fertility.

The Bench of former days, he represents to have been a glorious harvest of character, and he deplores its present condition, as, with scarcely more than a single exception, one of utter and desolate barrenness. He himself remembers the Lord Justice Clerk Macqueen of Braxfield, and he assures me, that, since his death, the whole exterior of judicial deportment has been quite altered—and I verily believe he thinks it has been altered for the worse, although there are few of his opinions, probably, in which he is more singular than in this. Over the mantlepiece of his study, he has a very fine print of this old Judge, in his full robes of office, which he seldom looks at without taking occasion to introduce some strange grotesque anecdote of its original. If the resemblance of the picture be exact, as he says it is, old Braxfield must

indeed have been a person, whom nobody could for an instant suppose to be one of the ordinary race of mortals. His face is broad, and the whole of its muscles appear to be firm and ponderous in their texture—you cannot suppose that such were ever nourished upon kickshaws—they have obviously borrowed their substance from a stintless regimen of beef, brandy, and claret. His nose is set well into his forehead, as if Nature, in making him, had determined to grudge no expenditure of bone. His mouth wears a grin of ineffable sagacity, derision, and coarse uncontrollable humour, all mingled with a copious allowance of sensuality. He must have had a most tyrannical quantity of Will, to judge from the way in which the wig sits on the top of his head; and nothing, indeed, can be more expressive of determined resolution than the glance of his light eyes beneath their pent-house brows, although from the stile in which they are set, one sees that they must have been accustomed to roll about, more than the eyes of steadfast and masculine men are commonly used to do. I should think it impossible that any joke could have been too coarse for this man's digestion; he must have experienced sensations of paradisiacal delight in reading Swift's description of the dalliance between Gulliver and Glumdalclitch. Even the Yahoos neighing by the river side, must have been contemplated by him with the most unmingled suavity.—It is, by the way, a strange enough thing, how many of our great English authors seem to have united the utmost activity and shrewdness of intellect, and commanding thoroughgoing pertinacity of character, with an intolerable relish for all the coarser kinds of Jests. The breed of such men was continued uninterruptedly from Echard to Swift and his brethren, and from Swift to Warburton and his brethren. These were all churchmen; had Braxfield been in the church, he must have been an author, and I doubt not he would have caught the falling mantle. I should like to see a portrait of the Cardinal, for whose edification Poggio compiled his *Facetiæ;* I dare say, there must be a family likeness between it and this of Braxfield.

In the days, when the strong talents of this original gave him a great ascendancy over the whole of his brethren of the coif, and a still greater over the gentlemen of the Bar, with many of whom he lived on terms of the most perfect familiarity—the style of private life generally adopted by the principal Judges and Advocates, and the style in which the public intercourse between these two sets of worthies was carried on, were both, as might be conjectured, as remote as possible from the decorum at present in fashion. Not that there was in either any licence productive of seriously bad effects to the people of the country, but there certainly must have been something as different as possible from any thing that has been witnessed in our English Courts of Law for these many centuries past. Braxfield was very fond of cards and of claret, and it was no very unusual thing to see him take his seat upon the Bench, and some of his friends take their's at the Bar, within not a great many minutes of the termination of some tavern-scene of common devotion to either of these amusements. I have never heard, that any excesses committed by Braxfield had the least power to disturb him in his use of his faculties; but it is not to be supposed, that all his associates had heads as strong as his, nor to be wondered at, although many extraordinary things may have occurred on such trying occasions. I have heard of an advocate coming to the Parliament-House fresh from the tavern, with one stocking white and the other black, and insisting upon addressing the Judges, exactly as ten minutes before he had been addressing the chairman of his debauch. One yet living is said to have maintained a stout battle on one occasion with the late President Dundas, (father to Lord Melville,) who refused to listen to him when he made his appearance in this condition. The check given to him seemed to have the effect of immediately restoring him to the possession of some moiety of his faculties; and, without being able to obtain one glimpse of the true reason which made the Judge reluctant to listen, or the true nature of the cause on which he conceived himself entitled to expatiate, he commenced a long and

most eloquent harangue upon the dignity of the Faculty of Advocates, ending with a formal protest against the manner in which he had been used, and interspersing every paragraph with copious repetitions of these words,—"It is our duty and our privilege to speak, my Lord; and it is your duty and your privilege to hear." Another Advocate, also yet living, is said, in a similar state of haziness, to have forgotten for which party, in a particular cause, he had been retained; and, to the unutterable amazement of the agent that had fee'd him, and the absolute horror of the poor client behind, to have uttered a long and fervent speech exactly in the teeth of the interests he had been hired to defend. Such was the zeal of his eloquence, that no whispered remonstrance from the rear,—no tugging at his elbow could stop him *in medio gurgite dicendi*. But just as he was about to sit down, the trembling writer put a slip of paper into his hands, with these plain words,—"You have plead for the wrong party;" whereupon, with an air of infinite composure, he resumed the thread of his oration, saying,—"Such, my Lord, is the statement which you will probably hear from my brother on the opposite side of this case. I shall now beg leave, in a very few words, to show your Lordship how utterly untenable are the principles, and how distorted are the facts, upon which this very specious statement has proceeded." And so he went once more over the same ground, and did not take his seat until he had most energetically refuted himself from one end of his former pleading to another.

The race, however, of Judges, Advocates, and, of course, of Clients, among whom such things passed without remark or reproach, is now fast expiring. In spite of the authority of Blackstone, it seems to be generally believed now-a-days, that no man will study a point of law the better for drinking a bottle of port, while he is engaged at this work. The uniform gravity of the Bench has communicated a suitable gravity to the Bar,—the greater number of practitioners at the Bar, having, indeed, necessarily very much diminished the familiarity with which the Bench and the Bar were of old

accustomed to treat each other; while the general change that has every where occurred in the mode of life, has almost entirely done away with that fashion of high conviviality in private, for which of old, the members of the legal profession in this place were celebrated to a proverb. In short, it seems as if the business of all parties were now regarded in a much more serious point of view than formerly, and as if the practice of the Barristers, in particular, were every day getting more and more into a situation similar to that in which the practice of their southern brethren has long been,—a situation which, as you well know, admits of very little of such indulgences as these old Scotch Advocates seem to have considered quite in the light of indispensables.

There is still, however, one Judge upon the bench whom W—— has a pleasure in bidding me look at, because in him, he assures me, may still be seen a genuine relic of the old school of Scottish Lawyers, and Scottish Judges. This old gentleman, who takes his title from an estate called Hermand, is of the Ayrshire family of the Fergusons of Kilkerran; the same family of which mention is frequently made in Burns's Poems, one of whose ancestors, indeed, was the original winner of the celebrated "Whistle of Worth," about which the famous song was written.

* * * *

Three joyous good fellows, with hearts clear of flaw;
Craigdarroch, so famous for wit, worth, and law;
And trusty Glenriddel, so skill'd in old coins;
And gallant Sir Robert, deep read in old wines.

Craigdarroch began, with a tongue smooth as oil,
Desiring Glenriddel to yield up the spoil;
Or else he would muster the heads of the clan,
And once more in claret, try which was the man.

&c. &c. in a strain equally delectable.

He is now, I suppose, with one exception, the senior Judge of the whole Court, for I see he sits immediately on the left hand of the President in the First Division. There is some-

thing so very striking in his appearance, that I wonder I did not take notice of it in an earlier letter. His face is quite thin and extenuated, and he has lost most of his teeth; but instead of taking away from the vivacity of his countenance, these very circumstances seem to me to have given it a degree of power, and fire of expression, which I have very rarely seen rivalled in the countenance of any young man whatever. The absence of the teeth has planted lines of furrows about the lower part of his face, which convey an idea of determination and penetration too, that is not to be resisted; and the thin covering of flesh upon the bones of his cheeks, only gives additional effect to the fine, fresh, and healthful complexion which these still exhibit. As for his eyes, they are among the most powerful I have seen. While in a musing attitude, he keeps his eye-lids well over them, and they peep out with a swimming sort of languor; but the moment he begins to speak, they dilate, and become full of animation, each grey iris flashing as keenly as a flint. His forehead is full of wrinkles, and his eye-brows are luxuriant; and his voice has a hollow depth of tone about it, which all furnish a fine relief to the hot and choleric style in which he expresses himself, and, indeed, to the very lively way in which he seems to regard every circumstance of every case that is brought before him. Although very hasty and impatient at times in his temper and demeanour, and not over-scrupulous in regard to the limits of some of his sarcasms, this old Judge is a prodigious favourite with all classes who frequent the Courts, and, above all, with the Advocates, at whose expense most of his spleen effervesces. He is a capital lawyer, and he is the very soul of honour; and the goodness of his warm heart is so well understood, that not only is no offence taken with any thing he says, but every new sarcasm he utters endears him more, even to the sufferer. As for the younger members of the profession,—when he goes a circuit, you may be sure, in whatever direction he moves, to meet with an extraordinary array of them in the train of Lord Hermand. His innocent peculiarities of manner afford an

agreeable diversity to the surface of the causes carried on under his auspices, while the shrewdness and diligence of his intellect completely provide for the safety of their essential merits. And then, when the business of the Court is over, he is the very "prince of good-fellows, and king of old men;" and you are well aware what high delight all young men take in the company of their seniors, when these are pleased to enter, *bonâ fide*, into the spirit of their conviviality-ties. He has an infinite fund of dry, caustic, original humour; and, in addition to this, he cannot fail to possess an endless store of anecdotes; so that it is no wonder his company should be so fascinating to the young jurisconsults. In him they are no doubt too happy to have an opportunity of seeing a noble living specimen of a very fine old school, which has now left little behind it but the tradition of its virtues, and its talents, and its pleasantries;—a school, the departure of many of whose peculiarities was perhaps rendered necessary in a great measure by the spirit of the age, but of which it may be suspected not a little has been allowed to expire, which might have been better worth preserving than much that has come in its place. It is not, I assure you, from W—— alone that I hear lamentations over the decay of this antique spirit. It is sighed over by many that witnessed its manifestations ere they had yet come to be rare, and will long be remembered with perhaps still greater affection by those who have seen the last of its relics in the person of this accomplished gentleman and excellent judge.

There would be no end of it, were I to begin telling you anecdotes about Lord Hermand. I hear a new one every day; for he alone furnishes half the materials of conversation to the young groupes of stove-school wits, of which I have already said a word or two in describing the Outer-House. There is one, however, which I must venture upon. When Guy Mannering came out, the Judge was so much delighted with the picture of the life of the old Scottish lawyers in that most charming novel, that he could talk of nothing else but Pleydell, Dandie, and the High Jinks, for many weeks. He usu-

ally carried one volume of the book about with him, and one morning, on the bench, his love for it so completely got the better of him, that he lugged in the subject, head and shoulders, into the midst of a speech about some most dry point of law; nay, getting warmer every moment he spoke of it, he at last fairly plucked the volume from his pocket, and, in spite of all the remonstrances of all his brethren, insisted upon reading aloud the whole passage for their edification. He went through the task with his wonted vivacity, gave great effect to every speech, and most appropriate expression to every joke; and when it was done, I suppose the Court would have no difficulty in confessing that they had very seldom been so well entertained. During the whole scene, Mr. W—— S—— was present, seated, indeed, in his official capacity, close under the Judge.

Like almost all the old Scottish lawyers, Lord Hermand is no less keen in farming than in law, and in the enjoyment of good company. Formerly it was looked upon as quite inconsistent with the proper character of an Advocate, to say nothing of a Judge, to want some piece of land, the superintendence of the cultivation of which might afford an agreeable, no less than profitable relaxation, from the toils of the profession. In those days, it was understood that every lawyer spent the Saturday and Sunday of every week, in the milder part of the year, not in Edinburgh, but at his farm, or villa;—and the way they went about this was sufficiently characteristic. In order that no time might be lost in town after the business of the Court on Saturday, the lawyers had established themselves in the privilege of going to the Parliament-House, on that morning, in a style of dress, which must have afforded a most picturesque contrast to the strictly legal costume of full-dress black suits, in which, at that time, they made their appearance there on the other mornings of the week. They retained their gowns and wigs, but every other part of their equipment was in the very extreme of opposition to the usual integuments worn in company with these —riding-coats of all the splendid hues, not then as now aban-

doned to livery-servants, bright mazarine blue, pea-green, drummers' yellow, &c. &c., but always buckskin breeches, and top-boots and spurs. The steeds to be forthwith mounted by these embryo cavaliers, were meantime drawn up in regular lines or circles, under the direction of serving-men and cadies in the Parliament-Close; and no sooner did the Judges leave the bench, than the whole squadron got rid of their incumbrances, and were off in a twinkling—some to their own estates—others to the estates of their friends—but every one to some place or other out of Edinburgh. Although all this parade has long since dropt into disuse and oblivion, the passion for farming has by no means deserted its hold of the Scotch lawyers. Among many others, as I have said, Lord Hermand keeps up the old spirit with infinite zeal. It is not now in the power of professional people to leave Edinburgh at the end of every week; but the moment any session of the Court is over, and a few weeks of intermission are put in his power, he quits the city on the instant, and buries himself among his woods, and corn-fields, and cattle, till necessity compels him once more to exchange these for the "pulvis, strepitusque Romæ." Even in the city, there is in his dress and gait a great deal that marks his Lordship's rural attachments and habits. His stockings are always of the true farmer's sort, with broad stripes alternately of black and white worsted—and his shoes are evidently intended for harder work than pacing the smooth granite of the streets of Edinburgh. I confess that my eye lingers with very singular delight, even upon these little traits in the appearance of one, that may well be considered, and therefore cannot fail to be honoured, as the last representative of so fine a class.

P. M.

LETTER XL.

TO THE SAME.

I THINK you will allow me no inconsiderable share of credit for the cordial manner in which I have lauded the excellencies of the Scottish Barristers, when I tell you, that those whom I have particularly described to you, are each and all of them Whigs—most of them fervent, nay, bigotted Whigs, or, as Dr. Parr would say, χυτροδιδαλοι. Nor will it diminish the merits of my liberality, when I inform you, that the friend, under whose auspices my inspection of Edinburgh has been chiefly conducted, so far from regarding these eminent men with the same impartial eye of which I have made use, has well nigh persuaded himself into a thorough conviction, that their talents and attainments are most extravagantly over-rated in common opinion; and has, moreover, omitted no opportunity of detracting from them in private, when he may have heard me expatiate upon their praises. There are only two exceptions to this—Mr. Cranstoun and Mr. Jeffrey. The former he cannot help admiring and loving for the beautifully classical style of his eloquence, and, indeed, of all his attainments; but I think it forms no small ingredient both in his love and admiration, that Mr. Cranstoun happens to be sprung from one of the greatest of the old Border families, and so, it may be supposed, to have been nourished in infancy, with the same milk of romantic and chivalrous tradition, of which he himself imbibed so largely then, and with the influences of which even now his whole character and conversation are saturated and overflowing; for I have already said enough to satisfy you, that few men can quote the words of the poet with more propriety than Mr. W———

> "The Boy is Father of the Man,
> And I could wish my days to be
> Linked each to each in natural piety."

In regard to Jeffrey, his mode of thinking may perhaps appear something still more peculiar. In the first place, indeed, the talents of this remarkable man are of such an order, that it is quite impossible a man of such talents as Mr. W—— should not admire them. The direction which has been given to these great talents, is a thing which W—— contemplates, and has long contemplated, "more in sorrow than in anger." While nobody can more abominate the scope and tendency of the Edinburgh Review, than he does, he is very far from being one of those who extend the feeling of aversion due to the work, from it to its principal conductor, or, indeed, who feel any difficulty in sympathizing with some part, at least, of those early feelings and circumstances, to which, in all probability, the worst things in the *conduct* of this celebrated Journal may be traced. He understands too much of poor human nature, to be an inexorable judge of the failings of a man, whose general power of intellect, and general rectitude of feeling and principle, he cannot but acknowledge. At times, it is true, on some new piece of provocation, his temper deserts him for a moment; but he soon recovers his tranquillity, and, in common, the tone wherein he speaks of Mr. Jeffrey, is assuredly more nearly akin to that of affectionate regret, than to that of impatient spleen, far less of settled aversion and dislike.

In truth, Mr W——'s views of literature are of so large a kind, and he has so much accustomed himself to trace the connection which subsists between the manifestations of mind in one age, and those in ages preceding and following, that it would be a very inconsistent thing, were he to concentrate any overwhelming portion of the wrath excited in his breast by any particular direction of intellectual forces, upon the head of any individual author whatever. Besides, were he inclined to heap the coals of his vengeance upon any one head, on account of the turn which literary and political criticism has taken in our days, most assuredly it would be on no living head that he would think of laying such a burden. He regards the Scotch philosophers of the present day, and

among, or above the rest, Mr. Jeffrey and the Edinburgh Reviewers, as the legitimate progeny of the sceptical philosophers of the last age; and although he is far from having any sympathy with the feelings which the whole style of that philosophy most eminently and powerfully tends to nourish, he cannot for a moment permit himself to lay at the door of any one individual, a larger share in the common blame, that in strict, and yet in comprehensive justice, he thinks that individual ought to sustain. There is only one point of view in which Mr. W—— is accustomed to talk of Mr. Jeffrey, as having initiated a bad and destructive species of mental exertion among his countrymen, or, at least, as having so far assisted the natural tendency towards some such species, as to have merited, in no inconsiderable measure, the dispraise, both present and future, with which the initiator of any such species must of necessity lay his account.

One of the greatest curses of a sceptical philosophy, is that by leaving no object upon which the disinterested affections may exercise themselves; it is apt to cause the minds of mankind to be too exclusively taken up about the paltry gratifications of the personal feelings. When the true ornaments of our nature are forgotten, Pride and Vanity must become the arbiters of human life. All those periods of history, which are looked back upon as the most splendid, were times when men cared most about principles, and least about themselves; but when there are no longer any earnest notions about what is to be loved or respected, even the public themselves become infected with the delirium of wishing to despise every thing, and literature is made to assume a tone of petulance, which corresponds with this absurd and paltry passion, exactly in the same proportion in which it does violence to all the nobler thoughts and more delightful feelings, for whose nourishment the divine field of literature was originally intended by the great Author of our being. It is chiefly in having led the way in giving this direction to the criticism, and through that to the whole literature of our day, that Mr. W—— feels himself constrained to regard Mr. Jeffrey as hav-

ing been the enemy of his country, and as meriting, in all succeeding generations, the displeasure of high minded and generous Englishmen.

A man of genius, like Mr. Jeffrey, must, indeed, have found it an easy matter to succeed in giving this turn to the public mind, among a people where all are readers, and so few are scholars, as is the case here in Scotland. Endowed by nature with a keen talent for sarcasm, nothing could be more easy for him than to fasten, with destructive effect of nonchalance, upon a work which had perhaps been composed with much earnestness of thought on the part of the author, and with a most sincere anxiety after abstract truth, either of reasoning or of feeling. The object of the critic, however, is by no means to assist those, who read his critical lucubrations, to enter with more facility, or with better preparation, into the thoughts, or feelings, or truths, which his author endeavours to inculcate or illustrate. His object is merely to make the author look foolish; and he prostitutes his own fine talents, to enable the common herd of his readers to suppose themselves looking down from the vantage-ground of superior intellect, upon the poor, blundering, deluded poet or philosopher, who is the subject of review. It is a pitiable thing to contemplate the extent to which these evil fashions have been introduced among us, and I have no doubt that their introduction has been far more owing to the prostitution of the exquisite talents of Mr. Jeffrey, than to any one cause whatever; neither do I at all doubt, after what I have seen of Scotland, that the power of the unholy spells has been far greatest and far most effectual in the immediate centre of their ring. It is probable, I think, that if Mr. Jeffrey were at last to throw aside his character of Reviewer, and come before the world in a volume filled with continuous thoughts, and continuous feelings, originating in his own mind, he would find that the public he has so well trained, would be very apt to turn upon himself, and think themselves called upon to laugh, *more solito*, even at Mr. Jeffrey himself, when deprived of the blue and yellow panoply under which they have for so many

years been wont to regard his blows as irresistible, and himself as invulnerable.

The most vulgar blockhead who takes up and reads an article in the Edinburgh Review, imagines for the time that *he himself* is quizzing the man of genius, whose labours are there sported with. His opaque features are illuminated with triumph, and, holding the journal fast in his hand, he pursues his fantastic victory to the last extremities. Month after month, or quarter after quarter, this most airy species of gratification is renewed, till, by long habit, our blockhead at last becomes *bona fide* satisfied and convinced, that he is quite superior to any thing the age can produce. Now and then, to be sure, some passing event or circumstance may dart a momentary disturbance into the sanctuary of his self-complacency; but this will only make him long the more fervently for the next number of the Review, to convince him that he was all in the right—to rekindle the fluttering lamp of his vanity, and make the *sanctum sanctorum* of his conceit as bright a thing as ever. In the mean time, to talk in the plain way the subject deserves, whatever share of understanding or feeling has been allowed him by nature, remains totally uncultivated in the mind of this reader of Reviews, and the faculties of his mind are absolutely lost and sunk in one blind brute wish to see every thing levelled before his self-love. Of all human passions, that of vulgar and envious insolence is the one which least requires to be pampered and stimulated. It has been the moving principle in all the most disgusting scenes recorded in history. Caligula could not bear to see a man of a handsome person, or with a fine head of hair, in the Circus, or in the streets, and generally ordered such persons to be taken away and disfigured. During the direst periods of the French Revolution, the self-love of the people had been gratified with the downfall of so many kinds of distinction, that at last it grew to be a blind, infuriate, ungovernable impulse, which could not remain quiet, while any individual yet retained qualities which raised him above the multitude. Every species of merit was sure to be brought

to the block, or hoisted up to the *lanterne*, in this night of frenzy. The mad and ferocious scepticism also, which then prevailed, was only the principle of envy in disguise. It was envy which sought to extinguish every distinction between truth and falsehood, for fear it should be proved that any one thing was more excellent than any other. All was to be reduced to one dead level of uncertainty, and it was illiberal to consider a Greenlander as a less elegant or civilized person than an European. Such is the enthusiasm of the principal of popular self-love, when stimulated by a long series of indulgences, and pushed to the last extremity of its slothful and unwieldy luxuriousness. That any man of genius should ever thoughtlessly or wantonly minister to it in literature, must be a source of the utmost sorrow and regret to every one who has a love, and a love of intelligence, for those qualities which most distinguish man from the brutes. Such a love (in spite of all his many little prejudices and peculiarities,) glows no where with a more fervent flame than in the breast of Mr. W——; and such are the sorrowful feelings with which he is accustomed to contemplate the main sin which has disfigured and debased the splendid literary career of Mr. Jeffrey.

That such, however, must inevitably be the course and tendency of popular criticism among a nation which had become at once very fond of scepticism, and very weary of learning, might, I think, have been foreseen long ago; I by no means think it might have been effectually guarded against. To despise all the most divine emanations, of which the human mind can be made the vehicle, was a necessary appendage to that system which despises the records of Divine Wisdom itself, and which would erect, in their stead, a structure built upon no more stable foundations than those of the self-sufficing, self-satisfied sagacity of the speculative intellect of man. It is a very easy thing to deny, that the doctrines of Religious Scepticism have been ever openly and broadly promulgated in the pages of the Edinburgh Review; but I think no candid person can entertain the slightest doubt,

that the tendency of the whole work has been uniformly and essentially infidel. Unless it had been so, it must have been continually at variance with itself—it must have been but one string of discords from beginning to end. The whole tone of the jeering, sarcastic criticisms, with which it has been accustomed to salute the works of the more meditative and Christian authors of the time, would be enough to reveal to us the true purpose it has in view, even although it had never contained a single word expressly and distinctly bearing upon the subject of Religion. The truth is, moreover, that, in the present state of the world, all Christians are well entitled to say, that "they that are not with us are against us;" and the coldness and silence of the Edinburgh Reviewers would have been enough to satisfy any good Christian what their tenets are, even although they had never broken upon their general rule of coldness and silence by one single audacious whisper of mockery. The negative would have been enough without the positive side of the proof; but, alas! those who have eyes to see, and ears to hear, can have little difficulty in acknowledging, that the Edinburgh Reviewers have furnished their adversaries abundantly with both.

The system of political opinions, inculcated in the Edinburgh Review, is, in like manner, as I honestly think, admirably fitted to go hand in hand with a system of scepticism; but entirely irreconcilable with the notion of any fervent love and attachment for a religion, which is, above all other things, the religion of feeling. The politicians of this Review are men of great shrewdness and sagacity, and many of them are men of much honesty; but it is impossible to suppose, for a moment, that they are men either of very high or of very beautiful feeling. The whole of their views, in regard to the most important series of political convulsions which modern times have ever witnessed, are at variance with deep or refined feeling—they appeal uniformly and unhesitatingly to ideas, which stand exactly in the opposite extremity from those which men inspired with such feelings would have inculcated upon such occasions. To submit to Buona-

parte, for example, and to refuse aid to the young patriotism of Spain—these were advices which could only have been seriously pressed upon the consideration of such a nation as England, by men who had banished from their own minds a very great part of that reverence for *feeling*, (as abstracted from mere questions of immediate and obvious utility,) in the strength and nourishment of which the true old character of England, and of English politicians grew. In a word, it is sufficiently manifest, that whatever faults the system of these Reviewers may have had, or may still have, it has at least had the merit of being a system uniform and consistent in itself. To destroy, in men's minds the lingering vestiges of love for a religion which is hated by self-love, because its mysteries baffle and confound the scrutiny of the self-complacent—to reduce the high feeling of patriotism to a principle of arithmetical calculation of utility—and to counteract, by a continued series of sarcastic and merry antidotes, the impression likely to be produced by works appealing to the graver and more mysterious feelings of the human heart—these are purposes which I would by no means say the leaders of this celebrated Journal ever contemplated calmly and leisurely, as the prime objects of their endeavours; but they are purposes which have been all alike firmly, although some of them perhaps unconsciously, pursued by them; and, indeed, to speak the plain truth of the whole matter, no one of which could have been firmly or effectually pursued, without being pursued in conjunction with the others. "A house divided against itself cannot stand."

I am happy to say, however, that from all I have now seen and heard of the state of Scotland, this Review, in spite of the fierce popularity it for some years enjoyed, is by no means likely to effect any such lasting, and, of course, miserable change in the feelings and character of the people of Scotland, as might have been at one time expected by the Reviewers themselves, or dreaded by those who held sacred a very different set of feelings and principles, in all points, from those of which they have been the champions. In spite

of the infidelity of the Edinburgh Review, (for I really feel no scruple in using the word broadly,) and, indeed, in spite of the sceptical tendency of the whole body of Scotch philosophy—the Scotch are still a religious people, and likely, I trust, very long to continue so. In spite of the mean views of general polity, illustrated and exemplified in the Edinburgh Review, and the still more offensive levity with which things nearer home have sometimes been treated by it, there is still an immense majority of the people of Scotland, who see things with the eyes, I do not say of sincere (for of no one do I question the sincerity,) but of enlightened patriots—men who understand the value of national experience, and venerate those feelings of loyalty and attachment to the more formal and external parts of the English constitution, with the general decay of which, I have very little doubt, the whole fabric to which they are fixed, would be found to have lost many of its firmest props, as well as of its finest ornaments.

In regard to literature, I think the success of the Edinburgh Review has been far more triumphant than in any other department of its exertions. Here it had to encounter fewer obstacles in the previous character and habits of the Scottish people; for the influence of the Sceptical Philosophy, introduced by the great men of the last age, had very much removed all feelings of intense admiration for any works beside their own, from among almost the only class of people who in Scotland are much interested about such subjects. The Scottish education, too, as you have already seen in part, is not such as to oppose any very formidable barrier of repugnant feelings against the encroachment of the spirit of degrading mockery. Ignorant, in a great measure, of the mighty spirits of antiquity, the Scottish student wants in truth the most powerful of all those feelings, which teach and prepare other men to regard with an eye of humility, as well as of admiration, those who in their own time seem to revive the greatness of the departed, and vindicate once more the innate greatness of our nature. It is, indeed, no uncommon thing to meet

with men, calling themselves classical scholars, who seem to think it a part of their character as such to undervalue, on all occasions, the exertions of contemporary genius. But these are only your empty race of solemn pretenders, who read particular books only because few other people read them—and who, unable themselves to produce any thing worthy of the attention of their own age, are glad to shelter their imbecility under the shadow of over-strained exclusive reverence for ages that have gone by. It is not necessary to suppose, that liberal and enlightened scholarship has any thing in common with these reverend Tom Folios. The just and genuine effect of intimate acquaintance with the great authors of antiquity, is to make men love and reverence the great authors of their own time— the intellectual kinsmen and heirs of those whom they have so been wont to worship.

It is, indeed, a very deplorable thing to observe, in what an absurd state of ignorance the majority of educated people in Scotland have been persuaded to keep themselves, concerning much of the best and truest literature of their own age, as well as of the ages that have gone by. Among the Whigs in Edinburgh, above all, a stranger from the south is every day thunderstruck, by some new mark of total and inconceivable ignorance concerning men and things, which, to every man of education with whom he has conversed in any other town of Britain, are "familiar as household words." The degree to which the intellectual subjection of these people has been carried, is a thing of which I am quite sure you cannot possibly have the smallest suspicion. The Edinburgh Reviewers have not checked or impeded only the influence of particular authors among their countrymen; they have entirely prevented them from ever coming beyond the Tweed. They have willed them to be unknown, absolutely and literally unknown, and so are they at this moment. I do not on my conscience believe, that there is one Whig in Edinburgh to whom the name of my friend *Charles Lamb* would convey any distinct or definite idea. His John Woodville was ridiculed in the Edinburgh Review, and the effect of this

paltry ridicule has been not only to prevent the Scotch from reading John Woodville, (a tragedy which, although every way worthy of Lamb's exquisite genius, wants very many of the popular charms in which some of his other pieces are rich to overflowing)—but almost to prevent them from remembering that such a person as Charles Lamb exists, at least to prevent them most effectually from ever having recourse for delight and instruction to volumes, wherein as much delight and instruction may be found, as in any of similar size, which an English library possesses. Even the commanding, majestic intellect of Wordsworth has not been able to overcome the effect of the petty warfare kept up against it by a set of wits, one of whom only might have been expected to enter with some portion of intelligence into the spirit of so great and original a poet. To find fault with particular parts of Mr. Wordsworth's poems, or with particular points in the Psycological system upon which the whole structure of his poetry is built, this might have been very well either for the Reviewers, or the readers of the Review. But the actual truth of the case is something very different indeed from this. The reading public of Edinburgh do not criticise Mr. Wordsworth; they think him below their criticism; they know nothing about what he has done, or what he is likely to do. They think him a mere old sequestered hermit, eaten up with vanity and affectation, who publishes every now and then some absurd poem about a Washing-Tub, or a Leech-Gatherer, or a Little Grey Cloak. They do not know even the names of some of the finest poems our age has produced. They never heard of Ruth, or Michael, or the Brothers, or Heart-Leap Well, or the Recollections of Infancy, or the Sonnets to Buonaparte. They do not know that there is such a thing as a description of a Church-yard in the Excursion. Alas! how severely is their ignorance punished in itself. But after all, Mr. Wordsworth can have no very great right to complain. The same people who despise, and are ignorant of him, despise also, and are ignorant of all the majestic poets the world has ever produced,

with no exceptions beyond two or three great names, acquaintance with which has been forced upon them by circumstances entirely out of their controul. The fate of Homer, of Æschylus, of Dante—nay, of Milton—is his.

The spirit of this facetious and rejoicing ignorance has become so habitual to the Scotchmen of the present day, that even they who have thrown off all allegiance to the Edinburgh Review, cannot devest themselves of its influence. There is no work which has done so much to weaken the authority of the Edinburgh Review in such matters as Blackwood's Magazine; and yet I saw an article in that work the other day, in which it seemed to be made matter of congratulatory reflection, that "if Mr. Coleridge should make his appearance suddenly among any company of well educated people on this side the Tweed, he would meet with some little difficulty in making them comprehend who he was." What a fine idea for a Scottish critic to hug himself upon! How great is the blessing of a contented disposition!

P. M.

LETTER XLI.

TO THE SAME.

The Whigs are still lords of public opinion in Edinburgh, to an extent of which, before visiting Scotland, I could scarcely have formed any adequate notion. The Tories have all the political power, and have long had it; but from whatever cause, (and I profess myself incapable of assigning any rational one,) their power does not appear to have given them command of much sway over the general opinions, even of those that think with them regarding political matters. I confess that I, born and bred a Tory, and accustomed, in my part of the country, to see the principles I reverence supported by at least an equal share of talent, was not

a little mortified by certain indications of faint-heartedness and absurd diffidence of themselves among the Scottish Tories, which met my eye ere I had been long in Edinburgh.

I am inclined, upon the whole, to attribute a good deal of this to the influence of the Edinburgh Review. That work was set on foot, and conducted for some years, with an astonishing degree of spirit; and although it never did any thing to entitle it to much respect, either from English Scholars, or English Patriots, or English Christians, I can easily see how such a work, written by Scotchmen, and filled with all the national prejudices of Scotchmen, should have exerted a wonderful authority over the intellect of the city in which it was published. Very many of its faults (I mean those of the less serious kind—such as its faults in regard to literature and taste,) were all adapted for the meridian of Scotland; and for a time, certainly, the whole country was inclined to take a pride in its success. The *prestige* of the Edinburgh Review has now most undoubtedly vanished even there; but there still remains a shadow of it sufficient to invest its old conductors with a kind of authority over the minds of those, who once were disposed to consider them as infallible judges, *de omnibus rebus et quibusdam aliis;* and then the high eminence of some of these gentlemen in their profession of the law, gives them another kind of hold upon the great body of persons following that profession which is every thing in Edinburgh; because the influence of those who follow it is not neuturalized to any considerable extent, by the presence of any great aristocracy, or of any great intellectual cultivation out of themselves. The Scotch are a people of talkers; and among such a people, it is wonderful how far the influence of any one person may be carried around and below him, by mere second—third—and fourth-hand babbling, all derived from one trivial source. I am not, however, of opinion, that this kind of work will go on much longer. Jeffrey has evidently got sick of the Review—and, indeed, when I look back to what he has done, and compare that with what he might have done, I think this is no wonder; Brougham has enough

to do in Parliament—that is to say, he gives himself enough to do; and even there you well know what a charlatan kind of reputation he has—Horner is dead—Walter Scott has long since left them. The Review is now a very sensible plain sort of book; in its best parts, certainly not rising above the British Review—and in its inferior parts, there is often a display of calm drivelling, much beyond what the British Review itself would admit. And then there is no point—no wit—no joke—no spirit, nothing of the glee of young existence about it. It is a very dull book, more proper to read between sleeping and waking, among old, sober, cautious tradesmen, than to give any spring to the fancy or reason of the young, the active and the intelligent. The secret will out ere long—viz. That the Edinburgh Reviewers have not been able to get any effectual recruits among the young people about them. There is no infusion of fresh blood into the veins of the Review. When one visits Edinburgh, where one cannot stir a step without stumbling over troops of confident, comfortable, glib, smart young Whigs, one is at a loss to understand the meaning of this dearth. One would suppose that every ball-room and tavern overflowed with gay Edinburgh Reviewers. One hears a perpetual buzz about Jeffrey, Brougham, *the* Review, &c. &c., and would never doubt, that prime articles were undergoing the process of concoction in every corner. But, alas! the fact is, that the young Edinburgh Whigs are a set of very stupid fellows, and the Review must wait long enough, if it is never to be resuscitated but by them.

They are really a very disagreeable set of pretenders—I mean those of them that do make any pretensions at all to literary character. They are very ill educated in general; they have no classical learning; few of them can construe two lines of any Latin poet; and as for Greek, they scarcely know which end of the book should be held to their noses. They have never studied any philosophy of any kind—unless attending a course of lectures on metaphysics, delivered by a man far too ingenious to be comprehended for above five

sentences at a time, by persons of their acquirements and capacity, can be called studying philosophy. They know sometimes a little about chemistry and geology, to be sure; but these are studies in which the proficiency of mere amateurs can never be any great matter. They know a very little of English history and politics—enough to enable them to spin out a few half-hours of *blarney* in their debating societies. But, upon the whole, it may safely be asserted, that all they know, worthy of being known, upon any subject of general literature, politics, or philosophy, is derived from the Edinburgh Review itself; and as they cannot do the Review any great service by giving it back its own materials, I conceive that this work is just in the act of falling a sacrifice to habits of superficial acquirement, and contented ignorance, which it was short-sighted enough to encourage, if not to create, in order to serve its own temporary purposes among the rising generation of Scotland.

One would imagine, however, that these young Whigs might have begun, long ere this time, to suspect somewhat of their own situation. They must be quite aware, that they have never written a single page in the Edinburgh Review, or that, if they have done so, their pages were universally looked upon as the mere lumber of the book; contrasting, too, their own unproductive petulance, with the laborious and fruitful early years of those whom they worship, and in whose walk they would fain be supposed to be following—it is difficult to understand how they happen to keep themselves so free from the qualms of conscious imbecility. Perhaps, after all, they are *au fond* less conceited than they appear to be; but certainly, to judge from externals, there never was a more self-satisfied crew of young ignoramuses. After being let a little into their real character and attainments, I cannot say but that I derived a considerable degree of amusement from the contemplation of their manners. As for their talk, it is such utter drivelling, the moment they leave their text-books, (the moment they give over quoting,) that I must own I found no great entertainment in it. It is a pity to see a fine coun-

try, like Scotland, a country so rich in recollections of glorious antiquity, so rich in the monuments of genius, at this moment adorned with not a few full-grown living trees of immortal fruit—it is a pity to see such a country so devoid of promise for her future harvest. It is a pity to see her soil wasting on the nurture of this unproductive pestilential underwood, juices which, under better direction, might give breadth to the oak, and elevation to the pine.

* * * * *

* * * * *

The respectable elder Whigs must, of a surety, feel very sore upon this; for it is not to be supposed, that they can be quite so easily satisfied with these young *gregarii*, as the young *gregarii* are with themselves. I understand, accordingly, that nothing gives them so much visible delight, as the appearance of any thing like a revival of talent among their troops. When a young Whig makes a tolerable speech at the bar, or writes a tolerable law-paper, or adventures to confess himself author of a tolerable paragraph in a party print—in short, when he manifests any symptom of possessing better parts than the confessedly dull fellows around him, there is much rejoicing in the high places, a most remarkable crowing and clapping of wings in honour of the rising luminary. The young genius is fed and fattened for a season with puffs and praises; and, in consequence of that kind of dominion, or *prestige*, to which I have already alluded, the very Tories begin to contemplate him with a little awe and reverence, as a future formidable antagonist, with whom it may be as well to be upon some tolerable terms in private. Well—a year or two goes over his head, and the genius has not visibly improved in any thing except conceit. He is now an established young Whig genius. If any situation becomes empty, which it would be convenient for him to fill, and if, notwithstanding of this, he is not promoted to it by those, whom, on every occasion, he makes the object of

his ignorant abuse—this neglect of him is talked of by himself and his friends, as if it were virtually a neglect of *genius* in the abstract;—with so much readiness do these good people enter into the spirit of a personification. A Dutch painter could not typify ideal Beauty under a more clumsy and heavy shape, than they sometimes do Genius; nor are the languishing, coy, and conscious airs of some Venus over a *lust-house* at Schedam, a whit more exquisite in their way, than the fat indignant fatuity of some of those neglected geniuses of Scotland.

So many of these geniuses, however, have now been puffed up, and pushed up to a little temporary reputation, and then sunk under their own weight into their own mud, that one should suppose the elevators must now be a little weary of exerting their mechanical powers in that way. Their situation is, indeed, almost as discouraging as that of Sisyphus, doomed for ever to struggle in vain against the obstinate, or, as Homer calls it, the "*impudent*" *stone's alacrity in sinking*.

Ἀλλὶ αγυλα πεδονδε κυλινδετο λαας ανασσε.

P. M.

LETTER XLII.

TO THE SAME.

DEAR WILLIAMS,

I TRUST, that among the many *literateurs* of Edinburgh, there will ere long be found some person to compose a full and detailed history of this city, considered as a great mart of literature. I do not know of any other instance, in the whole history of the world, of such a mart existing and flourishing in a place not the seat of a government, or residence of a court, or centre of any very great political interest. The only place which at all approaches to Edinburgh in this view is Weimar; for the residence of so small a prince as the Grand

Duke can scarcely be considered as conferring any thing like what we would understand by the character of a capital. But even there it can scarcely be said that any great mart of literature exists, or indeed existed even at the time when Wieland, Schiller, and Goëthe, lived together under the wing of the palace. Books were written there in abundance, and many books were nominally published there; but the true centre from which they were diffused over Germany was always Leipsick.

Till within these twenty years, I suppose there was no such thing in Edinburgh as the great trade of Publishing. Now and then some volume of sermons or so issued from the press of some Edinburgh typographer, and after lying for a year or two upon the counter of some of their booksellers, was dismissed into total oblivion, as it probably deserved to be. But of all the great literary men of the last age, who lived in Edinburgh, there was no one who ever thought of publishing his books in Edinburgh. The *trade* here never aspired to any thing beyond forming a very humble appendage of understrappers to the *trade* of the Row. Even if the name of an Edinburgh bookseller did appear upon a title-page, that was only a compliment allowed him by the courtesy of the great London dealer, whose instrument and agent he was. Every thing was conducted by the Northern Bibliopoles in the same timid spirit of which this affords a specimen. The dulness of their atmosphere was never enlivened by one breath of daring. They were all petty retailers, inhabiting snug shops, and making a little money in the most tedious and uniform way imaginable. As for risking the little money they did make upon any bold adventure, which might have tripled the sum, or swept it entirely away, this was a thing of which they had not the most remote conception. In short, in spite of Hume and Robertson, and the whole generation of lesser stars, who clustered around those great luminaries, the spirit of literary adventure had never approached the bibliopoles of Edinburgh. They never dreamed of making fortunes for themselves, far less of being the means of bestowing fortunes

upon others, by carrying on operations in the large and splendid style of mercantile enterprize.

The only thing that could be looked upon as any invasion of this quiescent state of matters, was the appearance of the Mirrors, and some other works in the same style, or by the same hands, which were published in the shop of Mr. Creech, then the Prince of the Edinburgh Trade—and which, of course, must have attracted no inconsiderable share of attention to him and his shop. But this bibliopole was a very indifferent master of his trade, and wanted entirely the wit to take due advantage of "the goods the gods provided." He was himself a literary character, and he was always a great man in the magistracy of the city; and perhaps he would have thought it beneath his dignity to be a mere ordinary money-making bookseller. Not that he had any aversion to money-making; on the contrary, he was prodigiously fond of money, and indeed carried his love of it in many things to a ridiculous extent. But he had been trained in all the timid prejudices of the old Edinburgh school of booksellers, and not daring to make money in a bold and magnificent way, neither did he dare to run the risk of losing any part of what he had made. Had he possessed either the shrewdness or the spirit of some of his successors, there is no question he might have set on foot a fine race of rivalry among the literary men about him—a race, of which the ultimate gains would undoubtedly have been greatest to himself. But he was not aware of the powers of that great *momentum*, of which I have spoken on a former occasion. He never had the sense to perceive that his true game lay in making high sweep-stakes; and the consequence was, that nobody would take the trouble either of training or running for his courses. Not thinking, therefore, of entering into competition with the great booksellers of the metropolis, in regard to the stimulating of literary ardour by the weight of his purse, his ambition was to surpass all his own brethren in Edinburgh, in the attractions of his shop—which, if the account I hear be true, he must certainly have succeeded in rendering a very delightful lounge,

He had been originally educated with a view to the Kirk, and had performed, in his younger days, a considerable part of the grand tour, in quality of governor to a young nobleman; and he was thus entitled to look upon himself as quite a different sort of person from the ordinary brothers of the trade. And then he could write paragraphs in the newspapers—verse or prose, witty or sentimental, as might suit the occasion. Above all, he was a wit and a story-teller of high eminence—one who sat every day "at good men's feasts," and delighted the company with the narration of humorous incidents, or rather the dramatic exposition of humorous characters. His stories were not many, and they were all regularly built, and formal things in their way, but the man had a vein of pleasantry, the interest of which was not to be exhausted with the novelty of the tale, or even with the novelty of the particular expressions of which he made use in telling it. In short, Creech was one of the prime characters of the place, and it was a necessary thing to go to his shop every now and then, and see him there in his glory. I have seen a print of him, which represents him as a precise, intelligent-looking old gentleman, in stiff curls, and a nice suit of black, and having a great air of courtly suavity, mingled with not a little conceit and self-importance in his aspect. But W——, who knew him well, assures me that although this print gives his features very faithfully, and in all probability the air also in which he thought it fit and proper to sit to the painter, it gives not merely an inadequate, but a perfectly false idea of the real character of the man. The spirit of fun, he tells me, ran frolicking through his veins with the blood that filled them; and there was a roguish twinkle in his small, glittering grey eye, and a richness of jocularity in the wrinkles beneath and around them, that nothing could resist. It may be supposed that such a person would go through the ceremonial of a bookseller's shop with something more than mere decorum.

At the time when the periodical works I have mentioned were in the course of publication, it was the custom of many of their chief supporters to go and breakfast with Creech, which

they called attending Creech's levee—and his house was conveniently situated for this, being in the immediate vicinity of the Parliament-House, with which then, as now, all the literary characters of Edinburgh had a close connexion. The pleaant conversation of the man, and his respectable appearance, and latterly, perhaps, his high civic dignities, (for he was Lord Provost ere he died,) all conspired in making Mr. Creech a person of no ordinary importance, and in no ordinary request. The trade slumbered on year after year, in a quiet and respectable state of inaction, under the auspices of a man with whom nobody could enter upon any competition in so many important particulars, till, all of a sudden, there sprung up a new tribe of autho rs, who had tact enough to observe the absurdity of the way in which matters were going on, and forthwith there sprung up a new set of booksellers, who had the wit to understand that some great change was about to occur, and to prepare themselves, *vi et armis*, to take proper advantage of the commotion theyforesaw. It is not easy to discover very accurately, how much of the merit of the change belongs to the new authors themselves, and how much of it belongs to the booksellers. They share the whole of it between them, and never assuredly was a change so remarkable, so suddenly, and yet so effectually produced. In one moment, Mr. Creech was supplanted in his authority. Till the moment of his death, indeed, he was allowed to retain all manner of place, precedence, style, and dignity; but the essence of his kingship was gone —and the booksellers of Edinburgh, like the Mahratta Nabobs and Rajahs, owned the sway of one that bore not the name of Emperor.

The first manifestation of the new state of things was no less an occurrence than the appearance of the first Number of the Edinburgh Review—a thing which, wherever it might have occured, must have been a matter of sufficient importance, and which appearing here, was enough not only to change the style of bookselling, and the whole ideas of booksellers, but to produce almost as great a revolution in minds not so immediately interested in the result of the phenomenon. The

projectors of this Journal—both writers and publishers I should imagine—were quite satisfied that nothing could be done without abundance of money. Whoever wrote for their book must submit to be paid for doing so, because they would have no distinction of persons. But, indeed, I never heard it suspected, that any one objected to receiving on the publication of an article, nôt only the honour of the thing, but a bunch of bank-notes into the bargain. If a man does not want money himself, he always knows abundance of people that do; and, in short, the root of all evil is a medicament, which requires little sweetening of the cup, either to the sick or the sound palate.

The prodigious impetus given to the *trade* of Edinburgh by the first application of this wonderful engine, has never since been allowed to lose any part of its energy. The Review, in the first place, of itself alone, has been sufficient to keep all fear of stagnation far enough from the scene in which it makes its appearance. And from the Review, as might well have been foreseen, a kindred impulse has been continually carried into every region of the literary world—but most of all into the heart of the literature and the notions of the literary men of Edinburgh. Very shortly after the commencement of the Review, Mr. Walter Scott began to be an author; and even without the benefit of its example, it is probable that he would have seen the propriety of adopting some similar course of procedure. However this might have been, ever since that time the Edinburgh Reviewers and Mr. Walter Scott have between them furnished the most acceptable food for the reading public, both in and out of Scotland—but no doubt most exclusively and effectually in their own immediate neighbourhood; and both have always proceeded upon the principle of making the reading public pay handsomely for their gratification, through their fore-speakers, interpreters, and purveyors, the booksellers. It would be unfair, however, to omit mentioning what I firmly believe, that the efforts—even the joint efforts of these great authors, would not have availed to any thing like the extent to which

they have in reality reached, had they not been so fortunate as to meet with a degree of ardour and of tact, quite correspondent to their own, among the new race of booksellers, who had started into life along with themselves—above all, in Mr. Constable, the original publisher of the Edinburgh Review—the publisher of most of Mr. Scott's works, and, without doubt, by far the greatest publisher Scotland has ever produced.

There is no doubt that this person is deserving of infinite credit for the share he has had in changing the whole aspect of Edinburgh, as a seat of literary merchandize—and, in truth, making it, instead of no literary mart at all, a greater one than almost any other city in Europe. What a singular contrast does the present state of Edinburgh, in regard to these matters, afford, when compared with what I have been endeavouring to describe as existing in the days of the Creeches! Instead of Scotch authors sending their works to be published by London booksellers, there is nothing more common now-a-days, than to hear of English authors sending down their books to Edinburgh, to be published in a city, than which Memphis or Palmyra could scarcely have appeared a more absurd place of publication to any English author thirty years ago. One that has not examined into the matter, would scarcely be able to believe how large a proportion of the classical works of English literature, published in our age, have made their first appearance on the counters of the Edinburgh Booksellers. But we all know the practical result of this, videlicet, that at this moment an Edinburgh title-page is better than almost any London one—and carries a greater authority along with it. For my part, if ever I should take it into my head to publish a book, I should most undoubtedly endeavour to get it published in Edinburgh. No book can be published there, and totally neglected. In so small a town, in spite of the quantity of books published in it, the publication of a new book is quite sure to attract the attention of some person, and if it has the least interest, to be talked of in company. If the book be a

very interesting one in any way, its popularity extends with the most wonderful rapidity—and, ere a few days have elapsed, the snow-ball has grown so large, that it can be hurled to a distance with steady and certain assurance of hitting its mark. And, indeed, it is only in consequence of the frequency with which all this has occurred, that the imprimatur of an Edinburgh Bookseller has come to be looked upon with so much habitual respect even in the south. This is surely a very remarkable change; and, for all that I can hear, both authors and booksellers are indebted for it to nothing more than the genuine sagacity of the one individual I have mentioned. I believe it should also be observed, that the establishment of the press of Ballantyne, at the very same instant, almost, as the commencement of the Review, and the publication of the Lay of the Last Minstrel, helped to push on Scottish publications, or, indeed, Scottish literature. Before that press was set up in Edinburgh, I am told, nobody could venture a book to be printed in Edinburgh; afterwards, the Edinburgh press gained the same sort of celebrity as the Edinburgh title-pages.

One of the first things I do, whenever I come to any town, is to make a round of visits to all the principal bookseller's shops. I think they are by far the most amusing lounges in the world—picture-galleries and promenades they beat all to nothing. I am fond of all kinds of bookseller's shops; I scarcely know which I would prefer to have were I to be confined to one only; but they are all to be had in the utmost perfection, or very nearly so, in Edinburgh. The booksellers themselves, in the first place, are a race of men, in regard to whom I have always felt a particular interest and curiosity. They are never for a moment confounded in my mind with any other class of shop-keepers or traffickers. Their merchandize is the noblest in the world; the wares to which they invite your attention are not fineries for the back, or luxuries for the belly—the inward man is what they aspire to clothe and feed, and the food and raiment they offer are tempting things. They have whole shelves loaded with wisdom;

and if you want wit, they have drawer-fulls of it at every corner. Go in grave or merry, sweet or sour, sentimental or sarcastic, there is no fear these cunning merchants can produce an article perfectly to your mind. It is impossible that this noble traffick should not communicate something of its essential nobility to those continually engaged in it. Can a man put his name on the title-page of Marmion, or Waverley, or Old Mortality, or Childe Harold, without gaining something from this distinction—I do not mean in his purse merely, but in his person? The supposition is absurd. Your bookseller, however ignorant he may be in many respects, always smells of the shop—and that which is a sarcasm, when said of any other man, is the highest of compliments when applied to him. In the way of his trade, moreover, he must continually come into contact with customers and employers, of a class quite superior to those who frequent any other shop in the street—yes, or ware-house or counting-house either. His talk is not with the ignorant brute multitude, but with the elite of the *Genus Humanum*, the *Prima Virorum*, as Lucretius hath it—the wise and the witty ones of the earth. Instead of haggling over the counter with a smooth-faced Miss or Master, about some piece of foppish finery, or disputing with some rude, boisterous, coarse-minded dealer about casks or tuns, or ship-loads of rum, sugar, or timber—the bibliopole retires into some sequestered little *speak-a-word* nook, and seats himself beside some serious and refined author, or more serious and more refined authoress, to decide or pronounce upon the merits of some infant tragedy, epic poem, sermon, or romance—or he takes his stand in the centre of his outer court, and publishes to the Gentiles, with a loud voice, the praises of some new publication gone forth, or about to go forth, from his penetralia, to the illumination of the world. What an air of intelligence is breathed upon this man, from the surface of the universe in which he moves! It is as impossible for a bookseller to be devoid of taste and knowledge—some flavour at least—as it is for a collier to have a white skin or a miller to want one.

And then their claim to our respect is hereditary as well as personal. "Noble of a noble stem," they are representatives of worthies long since dead and sepulchred, whose names and achievements are still fresh in all men's recollection. What a world of associations are clustered about the bare name of any one of the great bibliopoles of days long since departed! Curll—whom Swift tormented—the audacious, hooked-nosed Edmund Curll! old Jacob Tonson, with his squint and his "two left legs"—and Lintot, with his orange-tawney waistcoat, and his grey ambling poney, who hinted to Mr. Pope how easy a thing it would be for him to turn one of Horace's Odes, as they were walking their horses up a little hill on the Windsor road. How green is the memory of these old "Fathers of the Row!" They will flourish a hundred years hence as brightly as they do now, and not less brightly, because perhaps another groupe or two of descendants may have "climbed the ascent of that mysterious tower," and have left kindred names behind them to bourgeon with kindred blossoms!

But the interest one feels about the person of a bookseller, is not sustained by fantasies and associations alone. I should like to know where it is that a man picks up so much interesting information about most interesting subjects, in so very easy a way, as by lounging for half-an-hour in a bookseller's shop. It is in a city what the barber's shop is in a village—the centre and focus of all information concerning the affairs of men—the arena for all disputation—the stage for all display. It is there that the sybil Fame sits scattering her oracular leaves to all the winds of heaven; but I cannot add with the poet,

> "Umile in tanta gloria,
> Coverta gia dello profetico nembo."

The bookseller is the confidant of his customers—he is the first to hear the rumour of the morning, and he watches it through all the stages of its swelling, till it bursts in the

evening. He knows Mr. ——'s opinion of Lord ——'s speech, sooner than any man in town. He has the best information upon all the *in futuros* of the world of letters; he has already had one or two peeps of the first canto of a poem not yet advertised—he has a proof sheet of the next new novel in his pocket; and if you will but promise to be discreet, you may "walk backwards," or walk up stairs for a moment, and he will show it you. Are these things of no value? They may seem so to you among the green hills of Cardigan; but they are very much the reverse to me among the dusty streets of London—or here in Edinburgh. I do love, from my soul, to catch even the droppings of the precious cup of knowledge.

To read books when they are upon every table, and to talk of them when nobody is silent about them, are rather vulgar accomplishments, and objects of vulgar ambition. I like to be beforehand with the world—I like both to see sooner and to see farther than my neighbours. While others are contented to sit in the pit, and gape and listen in wonder upon whatever is shown or uttered, I cannot be satisfied unless I am permitted to go behind the scenes—to see the actors before they walk upon the stage, and examine the machinery of the thunder before its springs are set in motion.

In my next I shall introduce you to the bookseller's shops of Edinburgh.

P. M.

LETTER XLIII.

TO THE SAME.

Dear Williams,

The importance of the Whigs in Edinburgh, and the Edinburgh Review, added to the great enterprize and extensive general business of Mr. Constable, have, as might have

been expected, rendered the shop of this bookseller by far the most busy scene in the Bibliopolic world of the North. It is situated in the High-Street, in the midst of the Old Town, where, indeed, the greater part of the Edinburgh Booksellers are still to be found lingering (as the majority of their London brethren also do) in the neighbourhood of the same old haunts to which long custom has attached their predilections. On entering, one sees a place by no means answering, either in point of dimensions, or in point of ornament, to the notion one might have been apt to form of the shop from which so many mighty works are every day issuing—a low dusky chamber, inhabited by a few clerks, and lined with an assortment of unbound books and stationery—entirely devoid of all those luxurious attractions of sofas and sofa-tables, and books of prints, &c. &c. which one meets with in the superb nursery of the Quarterly Review in Albemarle-Street. The Bookseller himself is seldom to be seen in this part of his premises; he prefers to sit in a chamber immediately above, where he can proceed in his own work without being disturbed by the incessant cackle of the young Whigs who lounge below; and where few casual visiters are admitted to enter his presence, except the more important members of the great Whig corporation—Reviewers either in *esse*, or, at least, supposed to be so in *posse*—contributors to the Supplement of the Encyclopædia Britannica—and the more obscure editors and supporters of the innumerable and more obscure periodical works, of which Mr. Constable is the publisher. The bookseller is himself a good-looking man, apparently about forty—very fat in his person, but with a face with good lines, and a fine healthy complexion. He is one of the most jolly-looking members of the trade I ever saw; and moreover, one of the most pleasing and courtly in his address. One thing that is remarkable about him, and indeed very distinguishingly so, is—his total want of that sort of critical jabber, of which most of his brethren are so profuse, and of which custom has rendered me rather fond than otherwise. Mr. Constable is too much of a bookseller, to think it at all necessary

that he should appear to be knowing in the merits of books. His business is to publish books, and to sell them; he leaves the work of examining them before they are published, and criticising them afterwards, to others, who have more leisure on their hands than he has. One sees in a moment that he has reduced his business to a most strictly business-like regularity of system; and that of this the usual cant of book-shop disquisition forms no part—like a great wholesale merchant, who does not by any means think it necessary to be the taster of his own wines. I am of opinion, that this may, perhaps, be in the end the wisest course a great publisher can pursue. Here, at least, is one sufficiently striking instance of its success.

If one be inclined, however, for an elegant shop, and abundance of gossip, it is only necessary to cross the street, and enter the shop of Messrs. Manners and Miller—the true lounging-place of the blue-stockings, and literary beau-monde of the Northern metropolis. Nothing, indeed, can be more inviting than the external appearance of this shop, or more amusing, if one is in the proper lounging humour, than the scene of elegant trifling which is exhibited within. At the door you are received by one or other of the partners, probably the second mentioned, who has perhaps been handing some fine lady to her carriage, or is engaged in conversation with some fine gentleman, about to leave the shop after his daily half-hour's visit. You are then conducted through a light and spacious anti-room, full of clerks and apprentices, and adorned with a few busts and prints, into the back-shop, which is a perfect bijou. Its walls are covered with all the most elegant books in fashionable request, arrayed in the most luxurious clothing of Turkey and Russia leather, red, blue, and green—and protected by glass folding doors, from the intrusion even of the little dust which might be supposed to threaten them, in a place kept so delicately trim. The grate exhibits either a fine blazing fire, or, in its place, a beautiful fresh bush of hawthorn, stuck all over with roses and lilies, as gay as a Maypole. The centre

of the room is occupied by a table, covered with the Magazines and Reviews of the month, the papers of the day, the last books of Voyages and Travels, and innumerable books of scenery—those beautiful books which transport one's eye in a moment into the heart of Savoy or Italy—or that still more beautiful one, which presents us with exquisite representations of the old castles and romantic skies of Scotland, over whose forms and hues of native majesty, a new atmosphere of magical interest has just been diffused by the poetical pencil of Turner—Thomson—or Williams. Upon the leaves of these books, or such as these, a groupe of the most elegant young ladies and gentlemen of the place may probably be seen feasting, or seeming to feast their eyes; while encomiums due to their beauties are mingled up in the same whisper with compliments still more interesting to beauties, no doubt, still more divine. In one corner, perhaps, some haughty blue-stocking, with a volume of Campbell's Specimens, or Dr. Clarke's Scandinavia, or the last number of the Edinburgh Review, or Blackwood's Magazine in her hand, may be observed launching ever and anon a look of ineffable disdain upon the less intellectual occupation of her neighbours, and then returning with a new knitting of her brows to her own *paullo majora*. In the midst of all this, the Bookseller himself moves about doing the honours of the place, with the same unwearied gallantry and politeness—now mingling his smiles with those of the triflers, and now listening with earnest civility to the dissertation, commendatory or reprobatory, of the more philosophic fair. One sees, in a moment, that this is not a great publishing shop; such weighty and laborious business would put to flight all the loves and graces that hover in the perfumed atmosphere of the place. A novel, or a volume of pathetic sermons, or pretty poems, might be tolerated, but that is the utmost. To select the most delicate viands from the great feast of the Cadells, Murrays, Baldwins, Constables, and Blackwoods, and arrange and dispose them so as to excite the delicate appetite of the fine fastidious few—such is the object and such

the art of the great Hatchard of Edinburgh. This shop seems to have a prodigious flow of retail business, and is, no doubt, not less lucrative to the bookseller than delightful to his guests. Mr. Miller is the successor of Provost Creech, in something of his wit, and many of his stories, and in all his love of good cheer and good humour, and may certainly be looked upon as the favourite bibliopole of almost all but the writers of books. He ought, however, to look to his dignity, for I can perceive that he is likely to have ere long a dangerous rival in a more juvenile bookseller, whose shop is almost close to his own—Mr. Peter Hill. This young gentleman inhabits at present a long and dreary shop, where it is impossible to imagine any groupe of fine ladies or gentlemen could assemble, *selon les regles;* but he talks of removing to the New Town, and hints, not obscurely, that Mr. Miller may soon see all the elegancies of his *boudoir* thrown into shade by an equally elegant *salon.*

Mr. Hill and you, my good fellow, would hit it to a hair; for, while his forenoons are past in the most sedulous attention to the business of a flourishing concern, his genteel and agreeable manners have made him a universal favourite with every body, so that one frequently meets with him at evening parties, when "it is good to be merry and wise;" and I declare to you, that you never heard a sweeter pipe. Our friend Tom Moore himself is no whit his superior.

As for shops of old books, classics, black-letter, foreign literature, and the like, I was never in any great town which possesses so few of them as this. It might indeed be guessed, that her riches in this way would not be great, after the account I have given you of the state of scholarship among the *literateurs* of the North. There is, however, one shop of this sort, which might cut a very respectable figure, even in places where attainments of another kind are more in request; and I confess I have visited this shop more frequently, and with more pleasure, than any of its more fashionable neighbours in Edinburgh. It is situated, as it ought to be, in the immediate vicinity of the College, and consequently quite out of

the way of all the fashionable promenades and lounges; but, indeed, for any thing I have seen, it is not much frequented even by the young gentlemen of the University. The daily visiters of Mr. Laing, (for that is the name of its proprietor,) seem rather to be a few scattered individuals of various classes and professions, among whom, in spite of the prevailing spirit and customs of the place, some love of classical learning is still found to linger—retired clergymen, and the like, who make no great noise in the world, and, indeed, are scarcely known to exist by the most part even of the literary people of Edinburgh. The shop, notwithstanding, is a remarkably neat and comfortable one, and even a lady might lounge in it, without having her eye offended, or her gown soiled. It consists of two apartments, which are both completely furnished with valuable editions of old authors, and I assure you, the antique vellum bindings, or oak boards of these ponderous folios, are a very refreshing sight to me, after visiting the gaudy and brilliant stores of such a shop as that I have just described. Mr. Laing is a quiet, sedate looking old gentleman, who, although he has contrived to make himself very rich in his business, has still the air of being somewhat dissatisfied, that so much more attention should be paid by his fellow-citizens to the flimsy novelties of the day, than to the solid and substantial articles which his magazine displays. But his son is the chief enthusiast—indeed, he is by far the most genuine specimen of the true old-fashioned bibliopole that I ever saw exhibited in the person of a young man. My friend W—— has a prodigious liking for him, which originated, I believe, in their once meeting casually in Rotterdam, and travelling together over most part of Holland in the Treckschuyt—and, indeed, this circumstance has been expressly alluded to by W—— in one of his poems. Here W—— commonly spends one or two hours every week he is in Edinburgh, turning over, in company with his young friend, all the Alduses, and Elzevirs, and Wynkin de Wordes, and Caxtons in the collection, nor does he often leave the shop, without being tempted to take some little specimen of

its treasures home with him. I also, although my days of bibliomania are long since over, have been occasionally induced to transgress my self-denying rule. I have picked up various curious things at a pretty cheap rate—and one book in particular, of which I shall beg your acceptance when we meet; but at present I won't tell you what it is. David Laing is still a very young man; but W—— tells me, (and so far as I have had occasion to see, he is quite correct in doing so,) that he possesses a truly wonderful degree of skill and knowledge in almost all departments of bibliography. Since Lunn's death, he says, he does not think there is any of the booksellers in London superior to him in this way, and he often advises him to transfer the shop and all its treasures thither. But I suppose Mr. Laing has very good reasons not to be in a hurry in adopting any such advice. He publishes a catalogue almost every year, and thus carries on a very extensive trade with all parts of the island. Besides, miserable as is the general condition of old learning in Scotland, there is still, I suppose, abundant occasion for one bookseller of this kind; and, I believe, he has no rival in the whole country. For my part, if I lived in Edinburgh, I would go to his shop every now and then, were it only to be put so much in mind of the happy hours we used to spend together long ago at Mr. Parker's.

This old gentleman and his son are distinguished by their classical taste, in regard to other things beside books—and among the rest, in regard to wines—a subject touching which it is fully more easy for them to excite the sympathy of the knowing ones of Edinburgh. They give an annual dinner to W——, and he carried me with him the other day to one of these anniversaries. I have seldom seen a more luxurious display. We had claret of the most exquisite La-Fitte flavour, which foamed in the glass like the cream of straw-berries, and went down as cool as the nectar of Olympus. David and W—— entertained us with an infinite variety of stories about George Buchanan, the Admirable Crichtonius, and all the more forgotten heroes of the Deliciæ Poetarum Scotorum.

What precise share of the pleasure might be due to the claret, and what to their stories, I shall not venture to inquire; but I have rarely spent an evening more pleasantly.

P. M.

P. S. They are also very curious in sherry.

LETTER XLIV.

TO THE SAME.

Dear David,

The only great lounging book-shop in the New Town of Edinburgh is Mr. Blackwood's. The prejudice in favour of sticking by the Old Town was so strong among the gentlemen of the trade, that when this bookseller intimated a few years ago his purpose of removing to the New, his ruin was immediately prophesied by not a few of his sagacious brethren. He persisted, however, in his intentions, and speedily took possesion of a large and airy suite of rooms in Prince's Street, which had formerly been occupied by a notable confectioner, and whose threshhold was therefore familiar enough to all the frequenters of that superb promenade. There it was that this enterprising bibliopole hoisted his standard, and prepared at once for action. Stimulated, I suppose, by the example and success of John Murray, whose agent he is, he determined to make, if possible, Prince's Street to the High Street, what the other has made Albemarle Street to the Row.

This shop is situated very near my hotel; so Mr. W—— carried me into it almost immediately after my arrival in Edinburgh; indeed, I asked him to do so, for the noise made even in London about the Chaldee MS., and some other things in the Magazine, had given me some curiosity to see the intrepid publisher of these things, and the probable scene of their concoction. W—— has contributed a variety of

poems, chiefly ludicrous, to the pages of the New Miscellany; so that he is of course a mighty favourite with the proprietor, and I could not have made my introduction under better auspices than his.

The length of vista presented to one on entering the shop, has a very imposing effect; for it is carried back, room after room, through various gradations of light and shadow, till the eye cannot trace distinctly the outline of any object in the furthest distance. First, there is as usual a spacious place set apart for retail business, and a numerous detachment of young clerks and apprentices, to whose management that important department of the concern is intrusted. Then you have an elegant oval saloon, lighted from the roof, where various groupes of loungers and literary dilettanti are engaged in looking at, or criticising among themselves, the publications just arrived by that day's coach from town In such critical colloquies, the voice of the bookseller himself may ever and anon be heard mingling the broad and unadulterated notes of its Auld Reekie music; for, unless occupied in the recesses of the premises with some other business, it is here that he has his usual station. He is a nimble active looking man of middle age, and moves about from one corner to another with great alacrity, and apparently under the influence of high animal spirits. His complexion is very sanguineous, but nothing can be more intelligent, keen, and sagacious, than the expression of the whole physiognomy; above all, the grey eyes and eye-brows as full of loco-motion as those of Catalani. The remarks he makes, are, in general, extremely acute—much more so, indeed, than those of any member's of the trade I ever heard speak upon such topics. The shrewdness and decision of the man can, however, stand in need of no testimony beyond what his own conduct has afforded—above all, in the establishment of his Magazine, (the conception of which, I am assured, was entirely his own,) and the subsequent energy with which he has supported it through every variety of good and evil fortune. It would be very unfair to lay upon his should-

ers any portion of the blame which particular parts of his book may have deserved; but it is impossible to deny that he is well entitled to a large share in whatever merit may be supposed to be due to the erection of a work, founded, in the main, upon good principles both political and religious, in a city where a work upon such principles must have been more wanted, and, at the same time, more difficult, than in any other with which I am acquainted.

After I had been introduced in due form, and we had stood for about a couple of minutes in this place, the bookseller drew Mr. W—— aside, and a whispering conversation commenced between them, in the course of which, although I had no intention of being a listener, I could not avoid noticing that my own name was frequently mentioned. On the conclusion of it, Mr. Blackwood approached me with a look of tenfold kindness, and requested me to walk with him into the interior of his premises—all of which, he was pleased to add, he was desirous of showing to me. I of course agreed, and followed him through various turnings and windings into a very small closet, furnished with nothing but a pair of chairs and a writing-table. We had no sooner arrived in this place, which, by the way, had certainly something very mysterious in its aspect, than Mr. Blackwood began at once with these words: —"Well, Dr. Morris, have you seen our last Number? Is it not perfectly glorious?—My stars! Doctor! there is nothing equal to it. We are beating the Reviews all to nothing—and, as to the other Magazines, they are such utter trash"——To this I replied shortly, that I had seen and been very much amused with the last number of his Magazine—intimating, however, by tone of voice, as well as of look, that I was by no means prepared to carry my admiration quite to the height he seemed to think reasonable and due. He observed nothing of this, however; or if he did, did not choose I should see that it was so—"Dr. Morris!" said he, "you must really be a contributor—We've a set of wild fellows about us; we are much in want of a few sensible intelligent writers, like you, sir, to counterbalance them—and then what a fine field you would

have in Wales—quite untouched—a perfect Potosi. But any thing you like, sir—only do contribute. It is a shame for any man that dislikes whiggery and infidelity not to assist us. Do give us an article, Doctor."

Such an appeal was not easily to be resisted: so, before coming away, I promised, *bonâ fide*, to comply with his request. I should be happy to do so, indeed, were it only to please my friend W——, who, although by no means a bigotted admirer of Mr. Blackwood's Magazine, is resolved to support it as far as he conveniently can,—merely and simply, because it opposes, on all occasions, what he calls the vile spirit of the Edinburgh Review. Besides, from every thing I have since seen or heard of Mr. Blackwood, I cannot but feel a most friendly disposition toward him. He has borne, without shrinking, much shameful abuse, heaped upon him by the lower members of the political party whose great organ his Magazine has so boldly, and, in general, so justly, attacked. But the public seem to be a good deal disgusted with the treatment he has received—a pretty strong re-action has been created—so that, while one hears his name occasionally pronounced contemptuously by some paltry Whig, the better class of the Whigs themselves mention him in very different terms, and the general conviction throughout this literary city is, that he is a clever, zealous, honest man, who has been made to answer occasionally for faults not his own, and that he possesses the essential qualities both of a bookseller and a publisher, in a degree, perhaps, not at all inferior to the most formidable of his rivals. Over and above all this, I must say, that I am fond of using my pen—witness my unconscionable epistles, David, past, present, and to come—and have long been seeking for an opportunity to try my hand in some of the periodical journals. In the present day, I look upon periodical writing as by far the most agreeable species of authorship. When a man sits down to write a history or a dissertation—to fill an octavo or quarto with Politics, Morals, Metaphysics, Theology, Physics, Physic, or Belles-Lettres, he writes only for a particular class of readers, and his book is

bought only by a few of that particular class. But the happy man who is permitted to fill a sheet, or a half-sheet, of a monthly or quarterly journal with his lucubrations, is sure of coming into the hands of a vast number of persons more than he has any strict or even feasible claim upon, either from the subject-matter or execution of his work. The sharp and comical criticisms of one man are purchased by people who abhor the very name of it, because they are stitched under the same cover with ponderous masses of political economy, or foggy divinity, or statistics, or law, or algebra, more fitted for their plain or would be plain understandings; while, on the other hand, young ladies and gentlemen, who conceive the whole sum and substance of human accomplishment to consist in being able to gabble a little about new novels and poems, are compelled to become the proprietors of so many quires of lumber *per quarter*, in order that they may not be left in ignorance of the last merry things uttered by Mr. Jeffrey, or Mr. Southey, or Mr. Gifford, or Sir James Macintosh. It is thus—for that also should be taken into consideration—that these works *pay* so much better than any others; or rather that, with the exception of a few very popular poems, or novels, or sermons, (which are sold off in a week or two,) they are the only works that pay at all. One might suppose, that as all the best authors of our day are extremely willing to pocket as much as they can by their productions, the periodical works all the world over, would be filled with the very best materials that living writers could furnish; and in our country, there is no question a near approach to this has been made in the case of the two great Reviews, which, after all that has been said against them, must still be admitted to be, in the main, the most amusing and instructive works our time produces.

But even these might be vastly improved, were it not for the vanity or ambition—(according to Gall and Spurzheim, the two principles are quite the same,)—of some of our chief writers, who cannot, in spite of all their love for lucre, entirely devest themselves of the old-fashioned ideas they im-

bibed in their youth, about the propriety and dignity of coming out, every now and then, with large tomes produced by one brain, and bearing one name on the title-page. In time, however, there is reason to hope people may become sensible of the absurdity of such ante-diluvian notions, and consent, for their own sakes, to keep all their best things for the periodicals. Indeed, I see no reason to doubt that this will be the case long before the National Bankruptcy occurs.

I, for my part, have such a horror at the idea of writing a whole book, and putting my christian and surname at the beginning of it, that I am quite sure I should never be an author while I live, were these necessary conditions to the dignity. I could not endure to hear it whispered when I might come into a room—"Dr. Morris—who is Dr. Morris?" —"O, 'tis the same Dr. Morris that wrote the book on so and so—that was cut up so and so"—or even "that was praised so and so, in such and such a Review."—I want nerves for this. I rejoice in the privilege of writing and printing *incognito*—'tis the finest discovery of our age, for it was never practised to any extent in any age preceding. There is no question that the other way of doing must have its own *agremens*, when one happens to practise it with great success —but even so, I think the mask is better on the whole, and I think it looks as if the whole world were likely to be ere long of my opinion. I don't suppose the author of Waverley will ever think of confessing himself—were I in his place, I am sure I never should. What fine persuasive words are those which Venus makes use of in the Æneid, when she proposes to the Trojan hero to wrap his approach to the city with a copious garniture of cloud—*multo nebulæ amictu.*

> "Cernere ne quis te, neu quis contingere posset,
> Molirive moram, aut veniendi poscere causas."

There could be no resisting of such arguments, even without the additional persuasiveness of a "*rosea cervix*," and "*ambrosiæ comæ divinum vertice odorem spirantes.*"

Mr. W—— came into the *sanctum sanctorum* before the bookseller and his new author had quite made an end of their confabulation. He forthwith asked Mr. Blackwood for his *gem*, upon which a silver snuff-box was produced, and I immediately recollected the inimitable description in the Chaldee MS., which had given rise to the expression used by my friend. Nothing I think can be more exquisite.—"And he took from under his girdle a gem of curious workmanship, of silver, made by the hand of a cunning artificer, and overlaid within with pure gold; and he took from thence something in colour like unto the dust of the earth, or the ashes that remain of a furnace, and he snuffed it up like the east wind, and returned the gem again to its place." But I must reserve the famous Chaldee MS., and the character of this far-famed Magazine, for another letter.

On coming away, W—— reminded me that I had said I would dine with him at any tavern he pleased, and proposed that we should honour with our company a house in the immediate neighbourhood of Mr. Blackwood's shop, and frequently alluded to in his Magazine, as the great haunt of its wits. Indeed, it is one of the localities taken notice of by the archaic jeu-d'esprit I have just quoted,—"as thou lookest to the road of Gabriel and the *land of Ambrose*," which last proper name is that of the keeper of this tavern. W—— had often supped, but never dined, here before, so that it was somewhat of an experiment; but our reception was such as to make us by no means repent of it. We had an excellent dinner, and port so superb, that my friend called it quite a *discovery*. I took particular notice of the salmon, which mine host assured us came from the Tay, but which I could scarcely have believed to be the real product of that river, unless W—— had confirmed the statement, and added, by way of explanation, that the Tay salmon one sees in London loses at least half its flavour in consequence of its being transported thither in ice. Here, it is certainly the finest salmon one meets with The fish from the Tweed are quite poor in comparison. The fact is, I suppose, that be-

fore any river can nourish salmon into their full perfection, it must flow through a long tract of rich country. The finest salmon in the whole world are those of the Thames and the Severn—those of the Rhine and the Loire come next; but, in spite of more exquisite cookery, their inferiority is still quite apparent. We made ourselves very happy in this snug little tavern till nine o'clock, when we adjourned to Oman's, and concluded the evening with a little Al Echam, and a cup of coffee.

The street, or lane, in which Ambrose's tavern is situated, derives its name of Gabriel's Road, from a horrible murder which was committed there a great number of years ago. Any occurrence of that sort seems to make a prodigious lasting impression on the minds of the Scottish people. You remember *Muschat's Cairn* in the Heart of Mid-Lothian —I think *Gabriel's Road* is a more shocking name. *Cairn* is too fine a word to be coupled with the idea of a vulgar murder. But they both sound horribly enough. The story of Gabriel, however, is one that ought to be remembered, for it is one of the most striking illustrations, I have ever met with, of the effects of puritanical superstition in destroying the moral feelings, when carried to the extreme, in former days not uncommon in Scotland. Gabriel was a Preacher or Licentiate of the Kirk, employed as domestic tutor in a gentleman's family in Edinburgh, where he had for pupils two fine boys of eight or ten years of age. The tutor entertained, it seems, some partiality for the Abigail of the children's mother, and it so happened, that one of his pupils observed him kiss the girl one day in passing through an anteroom, where she was sitting. The little fellow carried this interesting piece of intelligence to his brother, and both of them mentioned it by way of a good joke to their mother the same evening. Whether the lady had dropped some hint of what she had heard to her maid, or whether she had done so to the Preacher himself, I have not learned; but so it was, that he found he had been discovered, and by what means also. The idea of having been detected in such a trivial

trespass, was enough to poison forever the spirit of this juvenile presbyterian—his whole soul became filled with the blackest demons of rage, and he resolved to sacrifice to his indignation the instruments of what he conceived to be so deadly a disgrace. It was Sunday, and after going to church as usual with his pupils, he led them out to walk in the country—for the ground on which the New Town of Edinburgh now stands was then considered as *the country* by the people of Edinburgh. After passing calmly, to all appearance, through several of the green fields, which have now become streets and squares, he came to a place more lonely than the rest, and there drawing a large clasp-knife from his pocket, he at once stabbed the elder of his pupils to the heart. The younger boy gazed on him for a moment, and then fled with shrieks of terror; but the murderer pursued him with the bloody knife in his hand, and slew him also as soon as he was overtaken. The whole of this shocking scene was observed distinctly from the Old Town, by innumerable crowds of people, who were near enough to see every motion of the murderer, and hear the cries of the infants, although the deep ravine between them and the place of blood, was far more than sufficient to prevent any possibility of rescue. The tutor sat down upon the spot, immediately after having concluded his butchery, as if in a stupor of despair and madness, and was only roused to his recollection by the touch of the hands that seized him.

It so happened, that the Magistrates of the city were assembled together in their Council-Room, waiting till it should be time for them to walk to church in procession, (as is their custom,) when the crowd drew near with their captive. The horror of the multitude was communicated to them, along with their intelligence, and they ordered the wretch to be brought at once into their presence. It is an old law in Scotland, that when a murderer is caught in the very act of guilt, (or, as they call it, *red-hand*,) he may be immediately executed, without any formality or delay. Never surely could a more fitting occasion be found for carrying this old

law into effect. Gabriel was hanged within an hour after the deed was done, the red knife being suspended from his neck, and the blood of the innocents scarcely dry upon his fingers.

Such is the terrible story from which the name of Gabriel's Road is derived. I fear the spirit from which these horrors sprung, is not yet entirely extinct in Scotland; but on this I shall have a better opportunity to make a few remarks, when I come to speak at length of the present religious condition of the nation—the most important of all objects to every liberal traveller in every country—but to none so important as to the traveller who visits Scotland, and studies the people of Scotland, as they deserve to be studied.

Ever your affectionate friend,

P. M.

LETTER XLV.

TO THE SAME.

My dear David Williams,

I take no offence whatever with any thing you have said, nor do I think it at all likely that I shall ever take any serious offence from any thing you can say. The truth is, that you are looking upon all these matters in far too serious a point of view. I care nothing about this book, of which you have taken up so evil a report; but I insist upon it, that you spend one or two evenings in looking over the copy I send you, before you give me any more of your solemn advices and expostulations. When I have given you time to do this, I shall write to you at greater length, and tell you my own mind all about the matter.

Ever your's,

P. M.

LETTER XLVI.

TO THE SAME.

I PRESUME you have now done as I requested; and if so, I have no doubt you are prepared to listen to what I have to say with a more philosophic temper. The prejudicies you had taken up without seeing the book, have, I make no question, made unto themselves wings and passed away—at least the most serious of them,—and you are probably quite as capable of taking a calm and impartial view of the affair as I myself am; for as to my allowing any partiality for W—— seriously to warp my judgment concerning a literary Journal, in which he sometimes writes—this is, I assure you, a most absurd suspicion of your's—but, *transeat cum aliis.*

The history of Blackwood's Magazine is very singular in itself, and I think must long continue to form an important epoch in the literary history of Scotland—above all, of Edinburgh. The time of its first appearance was happily chosen, just when the decline of that intense and overmastering interest, formerly attracted to the Edinburgh Review, had fairly begun to be not only felt, but acknowledged on every hand; and had it not appeared at that particular time, it is probable that something, not widely different in spirit and purpose, must have ere long come forth; for there had already been formed in Scotland a considerable body of rebels to the long undisputed tyrannical sway of Mr. Jeffrey and his friends; and it was necessary that the sentiments of this class should find some vehicle of convenient expression. In short, the diet of levity and sarcastic indifference, which had so long formed the stable nourishment of Scottish intellect, had by repetition lost, to not a few palates, the charming poignancy of its original flavour; and besides, the total failure of all the political prophecies of the Whig wits, and, indeed, the triumphant practical refutation given by the great events of the preceding years to all their enunciations of political princi-

ples, had, without doubt, tended very powerfully to throw discredit upon their own opinions in regard to other matters. The Whigs themselves, indeed, were by no means inclined to acknowledge that the sceptre of their rulers had lost any portion of its power; but the continuance of their own firm allegiance was by no means sufficient to prevent this from being actually the case; for, in preceding times, the authority of the critical sceptre had been acknowledged by Scottish Tories, no less humbly than by Scottish Whigs; and it was too natural for these last to suspect, at this alarming crisis, that the former would now think themselves in possession of a favourable opportunity for throwing off a sway, which had always with them rested much more on the potency of fear than on that of love.

The subjection of the antecedent period had, indeed, been as melancholy and profound, as any thing ever exemplified within the leaden circle of an eastern despot's domination. There was, for a long time, no more thought among the Scottish reading public of questioning the divine right, by which Mr. Jeffrey and his associates ruled over the whole realms of criticism, than there is in China of pulling down the cousin-german of the Moon, and all his bowing court of Mandarins. In many respects, there is no doubt the Scotch had been infinitely indebted to this government—it had done much to refine and polish their ideas and manners—it had given them an air of intelligence and breeding, to which they had been strangers before its erection among them. But these advantages were not of so deep a nature, as to fix themselves with any very lasting sway in the souls of the wiser and better part of the people. They were counterbalanced in the eyes of the simple and less meditative classes, by many circumstances of obvious character and obvious importance too, (after these had once been able to fix attention;)—and those who were accustomed or able to reflect in a more serious and profound manner upon the condition of their country, could not, I suppose, be blind to another circumstance equally true, and far more generally and enduringly important than any other—namely, that the influence acquired by the

Edinburgh Reviewers over the associations of the great majority of Scottish minds, was not an influence accompanied with any views of philosophy calculated to ennoble human nature, or with any genial or productive spirit of thought likely to draw out the genius and intellect of the country in which their Review was published.

The national mind of any country is not likely to be elicited advantageously, if the reins of public association are managed with all the petulance of eager self-love, caring little for the investigation of any principle, or the expansion of any feeling, provided it can in the mean time assume to itself the appearance of superior smartness and cleverness. Love, which "hopeth all things and believeth all things," is the true inventive principle. It is the true caloric, which calls out every sort of vegetation from the soil, which contains in its bosom the sleeping germs of national genius. Now, the Edinburgh Review cared very little for what might be done, or might be hoped to be done, provided it could exercise a despotic authority in deciding on the merits of what was done. Nobody could ever regard this work as a great fostering-mother of the infant manifestations of intellectual and imaginative power. It was always sufficiently plain, that in all things its chief object was to support the credit of its own appearance. It praised only where praise was extorted—and it never praised even the highest efforts of contemporary genius, in the spirit of true and genuine earnestness, which might have been becoming:—Even in the temple of their adoration, the Reviewers still carried with them the swell and strut of their own worldly vanity; and, in the midst of their most fervent devotions, it was always easy to see that they conceived themselves to be conferring honour on the object of their worship. They never spoke out of the fullness of the heart, in praising any one of our great living poets, the majesty of whose genius would have been quite enough to take away all ideas, except those of prostrate respect, from the breasts of critics to whom any portion of the true mantle of an Aristotle, or a Longinus, or a Quinctilian, might have descended. Looking back

now after the lapse of several years, to their accounts of many of those poems, (such as Mr. Scott's, for example,) which have now become so deeply interwoven with the most serious part of every man's mind, it is quite wonderful to find in what a light and trivial vein the first notices of them had been presented to the public by the Edinburgh Reviewers. Till very lately, it may be doubted if there was any one critique on a contemporary poet, in the pages of the Edinburgh Review, which did not more or less partake of the nature of a quiz. Surely this was very poor work, and such was the view of it which a very large proportion, even of the Scottish public, had at last begun to entertain.

These faults—faults thus at last beginning to be seen by a considerable number of the old readers and admirers of the Edinburgh Review—seem to have been at the bottom of the aversion which the writers who established Blackwood's Magazine had against it; but their quarrel also included a very just disapprobation of the unpatriotic mode of considering the political events of the times adopted all along by the Review, and also of its occasional irreligious mockeries, borrowed from the French philosophy, or *soi-disante* philosophy of the last age. Their great object seems to have been to break up the monopoly of influence which had long been possessed by a set of persons, guilty of perverting, in so many ways, talents on all hands acknowledged to be great. And had they gone about the execution of their design with as much wisdom and good feeling as would seem to have attended the conception of it, I have little doubt they would very soon have procured a mighty host of readers to go along with them in all their conclusions. But the persons who are supposed to have taken the lead in directing the new forces, wanted many of those qualities which were most necessary to ensure success to their endeavours; and they possessed others, which, although in themselves admirably qualified for enabling them to conduct their projects successfully, tended, in the manner in which they made use of them, to throw many unnecessary obstacles in their way. In short,

they were very young, or very inexperienced men, who, although passionately fond of literature, and even well skilled in many of its finest branches, were by no means accurately acquainted with the structure and practice of literature, as it exists at this day in Britain. They saw well enough in what respects the literature of the day had been allowed to fall into a condition unworthy of the old spirit of English literature, but they do not seem to have seen with equal perspicacity, in how many points the literary practice of our time has been improved, beyond that of the ages preceding. With their minds full of love and veneration for the great serious authors of all nations and ages, and especially so for all the master-spirits of their own time, they appear to have entertained also a most singular warmth of sympathy for all the extravagancies, caprices, and madnesses of frolic humour that were ever in any age embodied in the vehicle of fine language, or made use of as the instruments of powerful intellect. Their veneration for intellectual power was too great—exactly as that of the Edinburgh Reviewers was too small: and they allowed this feeling, in the main a most excellent one, to shut from their eyes a thousand circumstances, both of agreement and disagreement, between the spirit of their own age, and the spirit of times antecedent,—all of which most especially and most imperatively demanded the attention of the Institutors of a new Literary Journal, having such objects and such pretensions as theirs. In short, they were too fresh from their studies, to have been able to look back upon any particular period of literary history with the proper degree of coolness and calmness. They admired rather too indiscriminately, and whatever they admired they never thought it could be improper or unsafe for them to imitate. They approached the lists of literary warfare with the spirit at bottom of true knights; but they had come from the woods and the cloisters, and not from the cities and haunts of active men, and they had armed themselves, in addition to their weapons of the right temper, with many other weapons of offence, which, although sanctioned in former times by the practice of the

heroes in whose repositories they had found them rusting, had now become utterly exploded, and were regarded, and justly regarded, as entirely unjustifiable and disgraceful by all who surveyed, with modern eyes, the arena of their modern exertions.

But even for this, there might have been some little excuse, had their weapons, such as they were, been employed only in behalf of the noble cause they had espoused. Such, however, was by no means the case. These dangerous instruments were too powerful to be swayed easily by the hot hands into which they had come; and—as if intoxicated with the delight of feeling themselves furnished with unwonted accoutrements, and a spacious field,—the new combatants began at once to toss their darts about them in directions quite foreign to those they should have had in view. They stained, in plain language, the beginning of their career with the sins of many wanton and malicious personal satires, not immediately subservient to the inculcation of any particular set of principles whatever, and in their necessary and ultimate tendencies quite hostile to the noble and generous set of principles, religious and political, as well as literary, of which these persons had professed themselves to be the champions. Since that time, experience and reflection seem to have taught them many lessons concerning the folly and vice of this part of their giddy career—but they have still not a little to learn before they can be made fully sensible of the true nature of some of their trespasses. And, in the mean time, after having been guilty of offences so manifest, they can have no right to complain, although those who witnessed their offences are slow in being made sensible to the sincerity of their repentance. They must take the consequences of their own audacious folly, in committing, or permitting, such gross outrages upon all good feeling—and submit to go through the full penalties of the Purgatory of Suspicion, before they hope to approach that Paradise of perfect Forgiveness, of which, among many other points of its beatitude, Danté has taken care to say, with a sagacity peculiar to himself,

"Molto e licito la, che qui non lece."

Great, however, as was the impropriety (to use the slightest phrase) of many of these early satires in this Magazine, I by no means would have you to believe, (as you seem to have done,) that the outcry raised against the Magazine among the Whigs of Edinburgh, and re-echoed by some of the minor oracles of the same party in London, was really produced by any just and pure feeling of indignation against them. The eagerness manifested by the enemies of the new Journal to add, by all possible exaggerations and misrepresentations, to the already large enough sum of its iniquities, betrayed that there was at the bottom of their zeal a very different set of causes—causes which, although in their own breasts far more effectual than any others, did not so well admit of being propounded in a way likely to captivate the popular assent. The true source of the clamour raised against by far the greater number of the articles in Blackwood's Magazine, was not their personality, (for of this, very many of those which excited most noise appear to me to be most perfectly guiltless,) but the nature of the spirit of thought which these articles exhibited—which was indeed, at bottom, utterly at variance with the old current upon which Mr. Constable's lawyers had, for so many years, floated with so little expenditure of reflection, and managed their helms with so little risk of being perplexed by any variety in the tides. As one instance of this, I may refer you to the Essay on the Periodical Criticism of Great Britain, which appeared towards the beginning of the Magazine, under the mask of a translation from some German author. This essay, as W—— informs me, was for many months a perfect text-book for vituperations of the work in which it made its appearance. And yet, when you have read it, I have no doubt you will agree with me in thinking that it is an able and excellent performance, which could only have excited so much clamour because it is too true and too effective. It was the first regular attack made with any striking degree of power of thought, or even with any display of nervous and manly language, against all the chief sins of the Edinburgh Re-

view. It is written in a style of such perfect courtesy and good-breeding to all parties, and it touches, with so much impartiality and independence, upon the quite opposite faults of the Quarterly Review, that I am mistaken if the Edinburgh Reviewers, now that they have had more experience of being attacked, would not be ashamed to say any thing against any attack written as this was. They could not refrain from crying out at the time, for it was the first caustic that had ever touched the centre of their sore; and, indeed, however silent they might have been, there is no question it could not have been applied with so firm a hand without making them wince to the quick.

Of the many subsequent attacks on the Review, some were equally well written, but few so free of the faults with which the Magazine has been too often chargeable. The Letter to Dr. Chalmers, for example, was an improper and unwarrantable expostulation, when considered as addressed to that eminent individual, and no doubt attached far greater blame to his conduct in occasionally assisting the Edinburgh Review, than the bulk of mankind are ever likely to think it deserved; it is probable, however, that the idea of writing such a letter might have been taken up rashly—merely as furnishing an occasion for more fully discussing the mode in which Religion had been treated in the Edinburgh Review, and without any wish to give pain to Dr. Chalmers, who is indeed treated, throughout the whole of it, in a style of great personal respect. But if some apology might be offered for this letter, the other letter of the same series, addressed to Mr. Playfair, could certainly admit of none. This was, undoubtedly, one of the worst of all the offences of the Magazine. I cannot well express the pain with which I perused it a second time, after having seen the venerable person to whom it is addressed, and become acquainted with the true character of his mind and dispositions. It was calculated to bring about no useful object whatever; it was a cruel interference with the private history of a most unassuming and modest man of genius; and the force of declamation

with which much of it is composed, can be regarded in no other light than an aggravation of the offence of composing it at all. Another letter, addressed about the same time to Lord Byron on the publication of his Beppo, was meanly and stupidly represented as a malignant attack on this great poet; whereas it is, in truth, filled, from beginning to end, with marks of the most devout admiration for his genius, and bears every appearance of having been written with the sincere desire to preserve that majestic genius from being degraded, by wasting its inspirations on themes of an immoral or unworthy description. It is, to my mind, a complete proof, that this Magazine was vituperated not so much from good principle as from selfish spleen, that almost as great handle was made of this energetic letter, which, I doubt not, Lord Byron would peruse with any emotions rather than those of anger, as of the very offensive address to Professor Playfair—about which there cannot possibly be two opinions among people of just feeling.

The attack upon Coleridge's Biographia Literaria, which appeared in one of the first numbers of the Magazine, was another sad offence—perhaps even worse than this on Mr. Playfair; because it was not merely the pushing to extravagance and illiberality a right and proper subject of reprehension, but a total departure from the principles of the Magazine itself, and almost, I think, a specimen of the very worst kind of spirit, which the Magazine professed to be fighting against, in the Edinburgh Review. This is, indeed, the only one of all the various sins of this Magazine for which I am at a loss to discover—not an apology—but a motive. If there be any man of grand and original genius alive at this moment in Europe, such a man is Mr. Coleridge. A certain rambling discursive style of writing, and a habit of mixing up, with ideas of great originality, the products of extensive observation and meditation, others of a very fantastic and mystical sort, borrowed from Fichte and the other German philosophers, with whose works he is familiar—these things have been sufficient to prevent his prose writings from

becoming popular beyond a certain narrow class of readers, who, when they see marks of great power, can never be persuaded to treat lightly the works in which these appear, with whatever less attractive matter they may chance to be intermingled. Yet even his prose writings are at this moment furnishing most valuable materials to people who know, better than the author himself does, the art of writing for the British public; and it is impossible that they should much longer continue to be neglected, as they now are. But the poetry of Coleridge, in order to be understood perfectly and admired profoundly, requires no peculiar habits of mind beyond those which all intelligent readers of poetry ought to have, and must have. Adopting much of the same psychological system which lies at the root of all the poetry of Wordsworth, and expressing, on all occasions, his reverence for the sublime intellect which Wordsworth has devoted to the illustration of this system, Coleridge himself has abstained from bringing his psychological notions forward in his poetry in the same open and uncourting way exemplified by his friend; and, what is of far more importance in the present view of the subject, he has adopted nothing of his friend's peculiar notions concerning poetical diction. He is perhaps the most splendid versifier of our age; he is certainly, to my ear, without exception, the most musical. Nothing can surpass the melodious richness of words which he heaps around his images—images which are neither glaring in themselves, nor set forth in any glaring framework of incident, but which are always affecting to the very verge of tears, because they have all been formed and nourished in the recesses of one of the most deeply musing spirits that ever breathed forth its inspirations in the majestic language of England. Who that ever read his poem of *Genevieve* can doubt this? That poem is known to all readers of poetry, although comparatively few of them are aware that it is the work of Coleridge. His love poetry is, throughout, the finest that has been produced in England since the days of Shakspeare and the old dramatists. Lord Byron represents the passion of love with a

power and fervour every way worthy of his genius, but he does not seem to understand the nature of the feeling which these old English poets called by the name of Love. His love is entirely Oriental: the love of haughty warriors reposing on the bosom of humble slaves, swallowed up in the unquestioning potency of a passion, imbibed in, and from the very sense of their perpetual inferiority. The old dramatists and Coleridge regard women in a way that implies far more reverence for them—far deeper insight into the true grandeur of their gentleness. I do not think there is any poet in the world who ever touched so truly the mystery of the passion as he has done in *Genevieve*, and in that other exquisite poem (I forget its name,) where he speaks of—

> ——————"Her voice—
> Her voice, that, *even in its mirthful mood,*
> *Hath made me wish to steal away and weep.*"

Now, what could be the object proposed by a writer, in a work professing to hold the principles of this Magazine, when he adventured to descend from the elevation of his habitual reverence, and minister among the many paltry priests who sacrifice at the shrine of paltry self-love, by endeavouring to heap new ridicule upon the character of a great genius, who had already been made so much the butt of ignorant ridicule as Mr. Coleridge? I profess myself unable to solve the mystery of the motive. The result is bad—and, in truth, very pitiable.

I think very differently indeed, concerning the series of attacks on Hunt, Hazlitt, and the whole of that pestiferous crew, on which Blackwood's Magazine has had the merit of fixing forever that most just and expressive of all nick-names, "*The Cockney School.*" If the Magazine had done nothing more than giving these creatures the everlasting distinction of this happy name, it would have deserved eternally well of the literature of our age. The extreme contempt and loathing felt by the castigators for the subjects of their most just chastisement, was, indeed, able to make them overstep

very absurdly the proper limits of critical language; and this has, no doubt, tended in some measure to weaken the effect of the attack, because it has probably prevented it from being carried on and concluded as it deserved to be. But, indeed the name alone is enough—it has already been adopted by the Quarterly and almost all the minor Reviews, and the whole regiment of the Magazines—and from these it has been carried into the vocabulary of half the Newspaper editors in the United Kingdom. Such a fire of contumely, kept up on this most conceited knot of superficial coxcombs, cannot fail to produce ere long the salutary effect of entirely silencing their penny trumpets of sedition and blasphemy—to say nothing of their worthless poetry. They are all entirely made up of affectation, and the pompous stiffness of their fine attitudes merely required to be pointed out by one sharp finger in order to be laughed at by all that looked upon them. *The Cockney School!* It would have required the shoulders of so many demigods to have been able to toss off such a load of ignominy; but on their's the burden sticks like the rope of the Satyr, and they cannot get quit of the incumbrance, except by giving themselves the coup-de-grace. Sentence of dumbness has gone forth against them, and ere long they must be executioners of it themselves.—They are by far the vilest vermin that ever dared to creep upon the hem of the majestic garment of the English muse. They have not one idea that is worthy the name of English, in the whole circle of their minds. They talk for ever about Chaucer, and Shakspeare, and Spencer, but they know no more about the spirit of these divine beings, than the poor printer's devils, whose fingers are wearied with setting together the types, which are degraded by being made the vehicles of their crude and contumelious fantasies. And yet with what an ineffable air of satisfaction these fellows speak of themselves as likely to go down to posterity among the great authors of England! It is almost a pity to destroy so excellent a joke. Unless the salt of the nick-name they have got preserve them, they cannot possibly last twenty years in the recollection even of the Cockneys.

The faults of this Magazine have been very great; the worst of them wanton and useless departures from the set of principles, and outrages upon the set of feelings, it has all along professed to hold sacred. These faults, however, I am inclined to attribute to nothing so much as to a total carelessness, in regard to the management of the work. The idea seems to have been that a Magazine is not bound to maintain any one set of opinions, in regard to any one set of objects, throughout the whole of its pages; but that it was quite sufficient to insert in every Number, a certain number of articles, full of the traces of proper feeling and thinking, and to fill up the rest with any thing that would amuse any class of Magazine readers, without the least concern about their agreement or disagreement with the main and presiding spirit of the book. Perhaps, after all, the truth may be, that the whole work was set about without any plan of any kind; and that therefore, although the contributions of the chief writers, being throughout animated with the warmth of a particular set of feelings and principles, have been enough to create something like a presiding spirit, the contradictory effect of other contributions was never considered, even by these persons, in the light of any serious infringement upon any serious rule. How all this may have been I know not; but, to my mind, the effect of the whole is such as I have endeavoured to depict to you. I look on the book as a sad farrago; but I think the valuable part of the materials is so great, as to furnish no inconsiderable apology for the mixture of baser things. And yet how much better might it have been, had the same talents been exerted upon some more regular system, and, above, all, under some more regular feeling of responsibility.

This last, indeed, is an idea that seems never to have disturbed, for a moment, the minds of the writers of this Magazine. It is not known who the editor is—I do not see how that secret can ever be divulged, as things now stand; but my friend W—— tells me that he is an obscure man, almost continually confined to his apartment by rheumatism, whose

labours extend to little more than correcting proof-sheets, and drawing up plans, which are mostly executed by other people. The efficient supporters, however, are well known—or, at least, universally suspected—although nobody seems to be able to say, with the least approach to certainty, what particular articles are written by any one individual among them. I have as yet seen little of any of them; but now that I have agreed to be one of their coadjutors in a small way, I shall, no doubt, have opportunities of being better acquainted with them. W—— has promised to ask several of them to dine with him some day next week—and, as usual, I shall have my eyes and ears about me.

The history of this Magazine may be considered in quite a different point of view—as the struggle, namely, of two rival booksellers, striving for their respective shares in the profits of periodical publications. Of the respective conduct of the persons who, in this point of view, might come to be taken into consideration, I cannot pretend to judge in any way; but I think it looks as if nothing could be more fair than that some division should take place here, as every where else, in that sort of spoil. Had the Magazine not appeared as it did, it is probable that the natural tendency, which a thriving trade has to split into competitions, would soon have given rise to something of the same sort among the bibliopoles of Edinburgh. As for the great bookseller against whom Mr. Blackwood seemed to have opened the war with so much vigour, I think he has shown less skilfulness than might have been expected in the forces which he has brought to act immediately in defence of the position attacked. I do not speak of the Edinburgh Review, for it is well able to take care of itself; but of the Scots Magazine, one of the eldest works of the kind in existence, which Mr. Constable has deen endeavouring to revive, so as to render it a fit competitor with the new, and, indeed, audaciously original Magazine I have been talking about. It seems as if nothing could be more dull, trite, and heavy, than the bulk of this ancient work. The only enlivening things in it are a few articles now

and then by Hazlitt, and a few better still by a gay writer of the name of Reynolds. But these are quite lost in the dullness all about them. In themselves, being all genuine gems of the Cockney School, they are of little intrinsic value, and their glitter only makes the lead in which they are set look more heavy than ever. Mr. Reynolds, however, is certainly a very promising writer, and might surely do better things than copying the Cockneys.

There is another circumstance about the writers of Blackwood's Magazine, which cannot miss to catch your attention, viz. that they have never been in any degree studious of keeping up the imposing stateliness and guarded self-importance, usually made so much of by critics and reviewers. They have presented themselves in all the different aspects which lively fancy and good-humoured caprice could suggest. They assume new disguises every month, and have a whole regiment of fictitious personages into whose mouths they have thrown so much matter, that they almost begin to be regarded as real personages by the readers of the Magazine; for, to ask whether such or such a name be a real or fictitious one, is always some trouble—and trouble is of all things what Magazine readers in general hold in most cordial detestation. Had these young writers been more reserved, they might perhaps have enjoyed more consideration than they now do among the foolish part of the public. Probably the spirit in which they have written has been but imperfectly understood by the majority. As Mr. Jeffrey says of the French Revolution—it is not easy to judge of the real scope of many movements and events, till a good while after they have taken place.

Ever your's.

P. M

LETTER XLVII.

TO THE SAME.

ANOTHER of the great morning lounges has its seat in a shop, the character of which would not at first sight lead one to expect any such thing—a clothier's shop, namely, occupied by a father and son, both of the name of David Bridges. The cause and centre of the attraction, however, is entirely lodged in the person of the junior member of the firm, an active, intelligent, and warm-hearted fellow, who has a prodigious love for the Fine Arts, and lives on familiar terms with all the artists of Edinburgh; and around whom, in consequence of these circumstances, the whole connoisseurs and connoisseurship of the North have by degrees become clustered and concentrated, like the meeting of the red and yellow stripes in the back of a tartan jacket.

This shop is situated in the High-Street, not above a couple of hundred yards from the house of my friend W——, who, as might be supposed, is one of its most frequent visiters. I had not been long in Edinburgh before I began to make some inquiries concerning the state of art in Scotland, and W—— immediately conducted me to this dilettanti lounge, saying, that here was the only place where I might be furnished with every means of satisfying all my curiosity. On entering, one finds a very neat and tasteful-looking shop, well stocked with all the tempting diversities of broad-cloth and bombazeens, silk stockings, and spotted handkerchiefs. A few sedate-looking old fashioned cits are probably engaged in conning over the Edinburgh papers of the day, and perhaps discussing *mordicus* the great question of Burgh Reform; but there is nothing either in the place or the company that at all harmonizes with one's notions of a great ὁρμητήριον of Gusto. After waiting for a few minutes, however, the younger partner tips a sly wink across his counter, and beckons you to follow him through a narrow cut in its maho-

gany surface, into the unseen recesses of the establishment. A few steps downwards, and in the dark, land you in a sort of cellar below the shop proper, and here by the dim and religious light which enters through one or two well-grated peeping holes, your eyes soon discover enough of the furniture of the place to satisfy you that you have at last reached the *Sanctum Sanctorum* of the Fine Arts. Plaster of Paris casts of the Head of the Farnese Hercules,—the Dancing Faun,—the Laocoon,—and the Hermaphrodite, occupy conspicuous stations on the counters; one large table is entirely covered with a book of Canova's designs, Turner's Liber Studiorum, and such sort of manuals; and in those corners where the little light there is streams brightest, are placed upon huge piles of corduroy and kerseymere, various wooden boxes, black, brown, and blue, wherein are locked up from all eyes save those of the privileged and initiated frequenters of the scene, various pictures and sketches, chiefly by living artists, and presents to the proprietor. Mr. Bridges, when I asked him on my first visit, what might be the contents of these mysterious receptacles, made answer in a true technico-Caledonian strain,—"Oo, Doctor Morris, they're just a wheen *bits*—and (added he, with a most knowing compression of his lips,)—let me tell you what, Dr. Morris, there's some no that ill *bits* amang them neither."

The *bit* that attracted most of my admiration, was a small and exquisitely finished picture, by William Allen—the subject, *Two Tartar Robbers dividing their Spoil.* I shall not describe this piece, because I have since seen a masterly etching of it in an unfinished state, executed by a young Scotch engraver of the name of Steuart, which I have ordered to be sent me as soon as it is completed, so that you will have an opportunity of judging for yourself. The energy of the design, however, and the inimitable delicacy of the colouring made me very curious to see some of the larger productions of the same artist; and I had no sooner hinted so much, than Bridges proposed to carry me at once to Mr. Allan's *atelier.* The artist, he said, was extremely unwell,

and confined to his room; but he could assure me of a kind reception. I needed very little pressing, so we proceeded immediately *qua data via fuit*. We had no great distance to walk, for Mr. Allan lives in the Parliament-Close, not a gun-shot from where we were.

After climbing several flights of a stair-case, we were ushered into the house of the painter; and Mr. Bridges being quite at home, conducted us straight into his painting room —the most picturesque painting room, I fancy, in Europe. Mr. Allan returned about two years ago to Edinburgh, (the place of his birth,) from a residence of many years in various regions of the East, and his apartment is decorated in a most splendid manner with the trophies of his wanderings. The wainscot is completely covered with rich clusters of military accoutrements, Turkish scimitars, Circassian bows and quivers, hauberks of twisted mail from Caucasus, daggers, dirks, javelins, and all manner of long unweildy fowling pieces—Georgian, Armenian, and Tartar. These are arranged, for the most part, in circles, having shields and targets of bone, brass, and leather for their centres. Helmets of all kinds and sizes, are hung above these from the roof, and they are interspersed with most gorgeous draperies of shawls, turbans and saddle-cloths. Nothing can be more beautiful than the effect of the whole; and indeed I suppose it is so far as it goes, a complete fac-simile of the barbaric magnificence of the interior decorations of an eastern palace. The exterior of the artist himself harmonized a good deal with his furniture; for he was arrayed by way of *robe-de-chambre*, in a dark Circassian vest, the breast of which was loaded with innumerable quilted lurking-places, originally, no doubt, intended for weapons of warfare, but now occupied with the harmless shafts of hair-pencils; while he held in his hand the smooth cherrywood stalk of a Turkish tobacco-pipe, apparently converted very happily into a pallet-guard. A swarthy complexion and a profusion of black hair, tufted in a wild though not ungraceful manner, together with a pair of large sparkling eyes, looking out from under strong shaggy brows, full of vivacious and ardent ex-

pressiveness—were scarcely less speaking witnesses of the life of roaming and romantic adventure, which, I was told, this fine artist had led. In spite of his bad health, which was indeed but too evident, his manners seemed to be full of a light and playful sportiveness, which is by no means common among the people of our nation, still less among the people of Scotland; and this again was, every now and then, exchanged for a depth of enthusiastic earnestness, still more evidently derived from a sojourn among men, whose blood flows through their veins with a heat and a rapidity to which the North is a stranger.

The painter, being extremely busy, could not afford us much of his time upon this visit, but showed us, after a few minutes, into an adjoining apartment, the walls of which were covered with his works, and left us there to examine them by ourselves. For many years I have received no such feast as was now afforded me; it was a feast of pure delight,—above all, it was a feast of perfect novelty, for the scenes in which Mr. Allan has lived has rendered the subjects of his paintings totally different, for the most part, from those of any other artist, dead or alive; and the manner in which he treats his subjects is scarcely less original and peculiar. The most striking of his pieces are all representations of human beings, living and moving under the influence of manners whereof we know little, but which the little we do know of them has tended to render eminently interesting to our imaginations. His pencil transports us at once into the heart of the East—the

> Land of the myrtle, the rose, and the vine,
> Where the flowers ever blossom, the skies ever shine,
> And all save the Spirit of Man is divine.

On one side we see beautiful creatures—radiant in a style of beauty with which poetry alone has ever attempted to make us familiar; on another, dark and savage men, their faces stamped with the full and fervid impress of passions which the manners and the faith of Christendom teach men, if not to subdue within them, at least to conceal in their ex-

terior. The skies, too, are burning every where in the brightness of their hot, unclouded, blue—and the trees that lift their heads among them, wear wild fantastic forms, no less true to nature than they are strange to us. The buildings also have all a new character of barbarian pomp about them—cities of flat-roofed houses, mingling ever and anon with intervening gardens—fountains sparkling up with their freshening spray among every shade of foliage—mosques breaking the sky here and there with their huge white domes and gilded cupolas—turrets and minarets shooting from among the gorgeous mass of edifices—pale and slender forms, that

> ——"Far and near,
> Pierce like reposing flames the tremulous atmosphere."

The whole room might be considered as forming of itself one picture—for, wherever I looked, I found that my eyes were penetrating into a scene, of which the novelty was so universal, as to give it at first sight something of the effect of uniformity.

The most celebrated of the pictures still in his possession, is the *Sale of Circassian Captives to a Turkish Bashaw.** I think it is probable you must have read some account of this picture in the newspapers more than a year ago; for it was one season in the London Exhibition, and attracted great admiration, as I hear, from all the critics who saw it there. You will find a pretty full description, however, in one of the Numbers of Blackwood's Magazine, which I have lately sent you—although I cannot say that I think this description quite so accurate as it might have been. The picture does not stand in need of the aid of fancy, in order to make it be admired; and I cannot help thinking there has been a good deal of mere fancy gratuitously mixed up with the statement there given, both of its composition and its expression. The essential interest of the piece, however—the groupe, name-

* This picture has since been purchased by the Earl of Wemyss and March.

ly, of the lover parted from its mistress, and the fine contrast afforded to this groupe, by the cold, determined, brutal indifference in the countenance and attitude of the Bashaw, are given quite as they ought to be; and the adjuncts, which have been somewhat misrepresented, are of comparatively trivial importance. I can scarcely conceive of a finer subject for this kind of painting; nor can I easily suppose, that it could have been treated in a more masterly manner. The great number of the figures does not in the least mar the harmony of the general expression; nay, in order to make us enter fully into the nature of the barbarian scene represented, it was absolutely necessary to show us, that it was a scene of common occurrence, and every day gazed on by a thousand hard eyes, without the slightest touch of compassion or sympathy. It was not necessary to represent the broken-heart sufferers before us as bending under the weight of any calamity peculiar to themselves alone. They are bowed down, not with the touch of individual sorrow alone, but with the despair, the familiar despair of a devoted and abandoned race—a race, among whose brightest gleams of felicity there must ever mingle the shadows of despondence—whose bridegrooms can never go forth "rejoicing in their strength"—whose brides can never be "brought out of their palaces," without some darkening clouds of melancholy remembrances, and still more melancholy fears, to cast a gloom over the gay procession. Solitary sorrows are the privilege of freemen; it is the darker lot of slaves to suffer in crowds, and before crowds. Their misery has no sanctuary; they are not left alone even to die. They are cattle, not men; they must be counted by the head before being led forth to the slaughter.

The colouring of this picture is as charming as its conception is profound. The fault found with it by some of the critics—I mean the greyness and uniform sobriety of its hues—strikes me as being one of its greatest beauties. Without this, it was impossible that the artist could have given so fine an idea of the studious coolness and shadiness of an oriental palace—so different, so necessarily different, from any thing

that luxury can ever demand in our northern climates. It harmonizes, too, in the happiest manner with the melancholy character of the scene represented. It seems as if even the eastern sun had been willing to withdraw his beams from such a spectacle of misery. Where the light does stream through the narrow window at the back of the lordly Turk, nothing can be richer than the tones of the drapery—the curtains that shelter—above all, the embroidered cushions and carpets that support the luxurious Merchant of Blood. The cold, blue dampness of the marble-floor, on which the victims of his brutality are kneeling, or staggering before him, contrasts, as it should do, with the golden pomp amidst which the oppressor is seated. It is so, that they who drink the waters of bitterness, and are covered with sackcloth and ashes, should be contrasted with him, who "is clothed in fine linen, and fareth sumptuously every day." There are, however, many other pictures of the artist against which the same charge might have been brought with greater justice.

There are several beautiful little pictures, the scene of which is laid in the same region; and I think they have an admirable effect as viewed in juxta-position with this splendid master-piece. They afford little glimpses, as it were, into the week-day employments and amusements of the beings, who are represented in the larger picture as undergoing the last severity of their hard destiny. They prepare the eye to shudder at the terrors of the captivity, by making it familiar with the scenes of mirth, and gayety, and innocence, which these terrors are fated so often to disturb. Such, above all, was the effect of a sweet little picture, which represents a Circassian family seated at the door of their own cottage, beneath the shadow of their sycamore, while the golden sun is going down calmly behind them, amidst the rich quiet azure of their own paternal mountains. The old father and mother, with their children sporting about their knees, while the travelling musician is dancing before them in his wild grotesque attitudes, to the sound of his rebeck—and the daughter just blushing into womanhood, that

peeps, with that face of innocent delight, over the shoulder of her mother—how little do they think for the moment of any thing beyond the simple mirth of their sequestered home! And yet such are the solitudes to which the foot of the spoiler may so easily find a path. Surely there is a fine feeling of poetry in the mind of this painter. He knows well, that there are two sides to the great picture of Human Life; and he has imagination to feel how they reflect, mutually, interest, and passion, and tenderness upon each other.

Another picture, delightfully characteristic of his genius, is that of *a Jewish Family in Poland making merry before a Wedding*. The piece is small, and the colouring, as usual with this artist, the reverse of glaring; but the whole is suffused over with the quiet richness of twilight, and the *effect* is at once so powerful and so true, that we cannot sufficiently admire it, when we consider how studiously all the common quackery of the art has been avoided in its production. The left of the canvass is covered with a cluster of happy faces, grouped above, below, and around their rustic musician, and gazing on the evolutions of a dance, wild, yet graceful and stately in its wildness, like the melody which accompanies it. The bride has scarcely passed the years of infancy; for among the Jews of Poland, and we believe we might add among the Jews of England too, the old oriental fashion of very early marriages is still religiously adhered to. Her hair is braided with jewels—another beautiful orientalism; and she surveys the scene from her post of eminence with a truly eastern mixture of childish delight, womanly vanity, and virgin bashfulness. Apart from the young people, near a window, the light of which comes mellowed through tangled tresses of ivy and rose-leaves, is seen a grave small group of the Elders of Israel. These patriarchal figures pay no respect either to the music or the dance; but they seem to make some atonement for this neglect by their close and assiduous attention to a certain tall picturesque flask,

> "Which leaves a glow like amethyst
> Upon the lips that it hath kissed."

The whole picture makes us feel delightfully present in a scene very far removed from our manners, but true in every thing to nature, and, in spite of its geography, true in every thing to that well-remembered East, which draws to itself the first morning-look and the last evening-look—which receives every hymn and prayer, and oath and vow—which is still the resting-place of the memory, the hope, and the faith of the expatriated Hebrew.

The vile habits common among such of this exiled race as are to be met with in our country, have had the effect of rendering the associations connected by us with the name of *Jew*, very remote from pleasing—to say nothing of poetical; nor have the attempts of a few poets and novelists to counteract these deep-rooted associations been at all successful in the main. In truth, they have not merited to be so, excepting in regard to their intention alone. It is useless to waste wit in attempting to gild over the meanness of a despicable old Hunks, who starves himself and his cat, and spends his whole time in counting rouleaus. A sentimental old clothesman or pawnbroker is a being whom we can by no means admit into our world of imaginative existence. He is as completely and manifestly an *ens rationis*, as any of the new species to which the human naturalist is introduced in the dangerous and delusive *horti sicci* of the circulating-library.

But the Polish Jews are a very different kind of people from our ones. They form a population of several hundred thousands, and occupy whole towns, villages, and tracts of territory by themselves. Here they live in a state of great simplicity and honesty, cultivating the soil, and discharging all the healthful duties of ordinary citizenship. Above all, they are distinguished from their brethren in Germany and elsewhere, by a rigid observance of the laws of their religion. In short, they are believers in the Old Testament, and still expect, with sincere devotion, the coming of their Messiah. The respect which a Polish Jew meets with all over the continent, so strongly contrasted with the utter contempt heaped

upon all the other children of his race, is primarily, of course, the fruit of that long experience which has established the credit and honour of his dealings; but it is certainly very much assisted and strengthened by that natural feeling of respect with which all men regard those who are sincere in what they seem. The character of these Polish Jews, with their quiet and laborious lives, with their firm attachment to the principles of honesty, with their benevolence and their hospitality, and, above all, with their fervid and melancholy love for their old Faith—a love which has outlived so many centuries of exile, disappointment, and wretchedness—this character, whatever may be thought of it in other respects, cannot surely be denied to be a highly poetical one. Mr. Allan, who has enjoyed so many opportunities of contemplating the working of human thoughts and passions under so many different shapes, has seen this character, and the manners in which it is bodied forth, with the eye of a poet and a painter; and I would hope the *Merry-Making* may not be the only glimpse of both with which he may favour us.

* * * *

But there would be no end of it, were I to think of acting Cicerone through the whole of his gallery, in a letter such as this: And besides, these are not pictures whose merits can be even tolerably interpreted through the medium of words. They are every where radiant with an expression of pathos, that is entirely peculiar to the art of which they are specimens. They cannot be comprehended unless they be seen; and it is worth while going a long journey, were it only to see them. It is not, on a first view, that the faults of pictures, possessing so much merit, can be at all felt by persons capable of enjoying their beauties. But I shall enter upon these in my next; I shall also say something of the pictures which Mr. Allan has painted more lately, and the scenes of which are laid nearer to ourselves. Wide as is the field of the East, and delicious as is the use he has made of that untrodden field —I am glad to find that he does not mean to confine himself

to it. The pictures he has painted of oriental subjects, are rich in the expression of feelings, gathered during his wanderings among the regions to which they belong. But there are other feelings, and more powerful ones, too, which ought to fix, and I think it probable they will do so, the matured and once more domesticated mind of such a painter as Mr. Allan.

P. M.

LETTER XLVIII.

TO THE SAME.

The largest and most finished picture, which Mr. Allan has painted upon any subject not oriental, (or at least not partaking of an oriental character,) is that of *the Press-Gang*. The second time that I went to his house, he was in the act of superintending the packing up of this fine piece, for being sent into the country;* so that I was lucky in having a view of it at all—for I certainly was not allowed time to contemplate it in so leisurely a manner as I could have wished. It is of about the same dimensions as the Circassian Slaves, and the canvass, as in it, is filled with a very large number of figures; but I am not prepared to say, that I think the same happy effect is produced by this circumstance as in the other.

I question, however, whether any scene of actual British Life could have been selected more happily calculated for such a pencil as Mr. Allan's. The moment one sees the picture, one cannot help being struck with wonder, that such a subject should have been left so long unhandled; but where, after all, was ever the British artist that could have occupied

* The picture belongs to Mr. Horrocks, of Tillihewan Castle, Dumbartonshire.

it in such a manner, as to throw any difficulties in Mr. Allan's way, or even to take away the least of the originality which he has displayed in its management? The canvass represents the house of a fisherman by the sea-side—neat and cleanly, as the houses of respectable fishermen are always found—but more picturesque in its interior than the house of any other poor man can well be, from the mixture of suspended nets and fishing tackle every where diversifying the more usual kinds of peasant *plenishing*. It is supposed, that the son of the fisherman had just returned from a long voyage in a merchant ship—his parents are preparing to welcome the wanderer with their fatted calf—and his mistress, having heard the news of his arrival, has hurried, half-clothed as she was, in the eagerness of her unsuspecting love, to be folded in his arms. Scarcely are the first warm, tearful greetings over, ere a caitiff neighbour gives notice to the Press-Gang,—and the picture represents the moment when they have rushed into the house, and pinioned their prey. The agony of the Sailor-Boy is speechless, and he stands with his hand upon his face, as if stunned and insensible to the nature of his misery. His other hand, however, has not quitted the hand of his sweetheart, who has swooned away, and is only prevented from lying like a corpse upon the floor, by this his unconscious support. His father looks on in despair; but he has presence of mind enough to know, that resistance would be unavailing. The mother has seized the lieutenant by the hand, and is thrusting upon him all their little household store of guarded guineas, as if she had hoped to purchase her boy's safety by her bribe. In a chair by the fire, meanwhile, which even joy could not have enabled him to leave, the aged and infirm grandfather sits immoveable, and sick at heart—his eyes turned faintly upwards, his feeble hands clasped together, and the big drops coursing each other down the pale and furrowed cheeks of his half-bewildered second childishness. The wife of the old man,—for she, too, is alive to partake in all this wretchedness,—is not so infirm as her partner, but she has moved from her chair only to give

aid to him. Dear as are her children to her, her husband is dearer—he is every thing to her, and she thinks of nothing but him. She has a cup of water in her hand, of which she beseeches him to drink, and gazes on his emaciated features with an eye, that tells of the still potency of long years of wedded love—a love that has survived all the ardours of youthful blood, and acquired only a holier power from the lapse of all their life of hardships. Perhaps this is the most noble conception in the whole picture—it does not disturb the impression of the parting of the youthful lovers; but reflects back a nobler sanctity upon all their sufferings, by bringing before us a fresh poetic vision of the eternal might of those ties, which that broken-hearted agony is bruising—

> "Ties that around the heart are spun,
> And will not, cannot, be undone."

Even over the groupe of stubborn mariners around the captive boy, the poetical soul of the painter has not disdained to lavish something of its redeeming softness; their hard and savage features are fixed, indeed, and resolute: but there is no cruelty, no wantonness, no derision, in their steadfast look. Like the officer who commands them, they do what they conceive to be their duty—and such it is—but they do no more. It was a delightful delicacy of conception, which made the painter dare to part with so much of the vulgar powers of contrast, and to make the rainbow of his tenderness display its gentle radiance, even here in the thickest blackness of his human storm.

The fainting girl is represented in a very difficult attitude, (I mean difficult for the painter,) her collapsed limbs, as I have said, being prevented from falling prostrate on the floor only by the hand of her lover, which, even in the speechless agony of despair, refuses instinctively to let her hand go. Her head, however, almost touches the floor, and her long dishevelled tresses of raven black, sweep it already with their disconsolate richness. Her virgin bosom, but a moment before bursting with the sudden swell of misery, is now calm

and pale—all its throbbings over for a time, even as if the finger of death had been there to appease them. Her beautiful lips are tinged with an envious livid stain, and her sunken eye-lids are black with the rush of recoiling blood, amidst the melancholy marble of her cheeks and forehead. One cannot look upon her without remembering the story of Crazy Jane, and thinking that here too is a creature whose widowed heart can never hope for peace—one to whom some poet of love might hereafter breathe such words as those already breathed by one of the truest of poets :—

"But oh! when midnight wind careers,
And the gust pelting on the out-house shed,
Makes the cock shrilly in the rain-storm crow,
To hear thee sing some ballad full of wo,
Ballad of ship-wrecked sailor floating dead,
Whom his own true-love buried in the sands!
Thee, gentle Woman—for thy voice re-measures
Whatever tones and melancholy pleasures
The things of Nature utter—birds or trees,
Or moan of ocean gale in weedy caves,
Or where the stiff grass 'mid the heath-plant waves,
Murmur and music thin of sudden breeze."

* * * * *

* * * * *

As I am not one of those who walk round a whole gallery of pictures in a single morning, and think themselves entitled to say they have seen them—and even to make criticisms upon their merits and demerits, I by no means thought of perplexing my feeling of the power of *the Press-Gang*, by looking at any other of Mr. Allan's pictures on the same day; I have often gone back since, however, and am now quite familiar with all the pictures still in his own possession. Those painted on domestic British subjects, are all filled with the same deep and tender tastefulness, which the Press-Gang so eminently discovers; but none of them are so happily conceived in point of arrangement, nor, perhaps, is the colouring of the artist seen to the same advantage in any one of them. In-

deed, in comparing the Press-Gang itself with the Circassian Slaves, the Jewish Family, and some of the earliest pieces, I could not help entertaining a suspicion, that in this great department the artist has rather retrograded than advanced, since his return to Britain. It may be that his eyes had been so long accustomed to light, shade, and colour, as exhibited in oriental regions, that his mode of painting had become imbued and penetrated with the idea of representing these effects alone—and that so the artist may not yet have entirely regained the eyes, without which, it is certain, he cannot possess the hand, of a British painter. It is very obvious, that this is a failing which, considering what master-pieces of colouring some of his older pictures are, cannot possibly continue long to lessen the power and beauty of his performances. I speak of the general colouring of his pieces—I have no doubt they may have lesser and more particular faults offensive to more scientific eyes, and perhaps not quite so likely to be got rid of. Almost all the artists, with whom I have conversed on the subject of his pictures, seem to say, that they consider him somewhat defective in his representation of the colour of the naked flesh. And I do think, (although I should scarcely have made the discovery for myself,) that he does make it rather dead and opaque, and gives it too little relief. But, perhaps, the small size of his pictures, and the multiplicity of figures which they contain, are circumstances unfavourable to this species of excellence. If his objects were less numerous, and presented larger surfaces, he would find it more easy to make them vivid, transparent, and beautiful, and to give them a stronger relief by finer gradations of shadow. A small canvass, occupied with so many figures, never has a broad and imposing effect at first sight. The first feeling it excites is curiosity about what they are engaged with, and we immediately go forward to pry into the subject, and spell out the story. A piece, with larger and fewer figures, if the subject be well chosen, is understood at once; and nothing tells more strongly on the imagination, or strikes us with

a more pleasing astonishment, than a bold effect of light and shadow, seen at a convenient distance.

The execution of a picture, however, is a thing of which I cannot venture to speak, without a great feeling of diffidence. The choice of subjects is a matter more within the reach of one that has never gone through any regular apprenticeship of Gusto; and much as I have been delighted with Mr. Allan's pictures, and much as I have been delighted with the subjects, too,—I by no means think, that his subjects are, in general, of a kind much calculated to draw out the highest parts of his genius, or to affect mankind with the same high and enduring measure of admiration and delight, which his genius, otherwise directed, might, I nothing question, enable him to command. In this respect, indeed, he only errs (if error there be) along with almost all the great artists, his contemporaries—nay, it is perhaps but too true, that he and they have alike been compelled to err by the frivolous spirit of the age in which they have been born. I fear, I greatly fear, that, in spite of all the genius which we see every day breaking out in different departments of this delightful art, the day of its loftiest and most lasting triumphs has gone by. However, to despair of the human mind in any one of its branches of exertion, is a thing very repugnant to my usual feelings.

P. M.

P. S. Before quitting Mr. Allan's *atelier*, I must tell you, that I have seen an exquisite sketch of the murder of Archbishop Sharpe, which he has just executed. The picture will, I doubt not, be his domestic masterpiece. The idea of painting a picture on this subject may probably have been suggested to him by a piece of business in which he is just about to engage, viz. making designs for the illustration of Waverley, and the other novels of the same author. What a field is here! I have seen none of his designs; but he will doubtless make them in a manner worthy of himself; and if he does so, his name will descend for ever in glorious companionship with that of the most original author of our days, and

the most powerful author that Scotland ever has produced. Q, F. F. Q, S, quoth

P. M.

LETTER XLIX.

TO THE SAME.

I KNOW of no painter, who shows more just reflection and good judgment in his way of conceiving a subject, and arranging the parts of it, than Allan. His circumstances are always most happily chosen, and the characters introduced are so skilfully delineated, as to prove that the painter has been an excellent observer of life. His pictures are full of thought, and show a most active and intelligent mind. They display, most graphically, the fruits of observation; and the whole of the world which they represent, is suffused over with a very rare and precious breathing of tenderness and delicacy of feeling. In short, were his subjects taken from the highest field of his art, and had they any fundamental ideas of permanent and lofty interest at the bottom of them, I do not see why Mr. Allan should not be truly a Great Painter. But his genius has, as yet, been cramped and confined by a rather over-stretched compliance with the taste of the times.

The highest purpose to which painting has ever been applied, is that of expressing ideas connected with Religion; and the decay of the interest attached by mankind to ideas of that class, is evinced by nothing in a more striking manner, than by the nature of the subjects now (in preference to them) commonly chosen for painting, and most relished by the existing generation. It would seem, indeed, as if the decay of interest in great things and great ideas, had not shown itself in regard to religion alone. Even subjects taken from national history, seem to be scarcely so familiar to the imaginations and associations of ordinary spectators, as to be much

relished or deeply felt in any modern exhibition room. It is probable, that subjects like those chosen by Wilkie, (and, of late, by Allan also,) come most home now-a-days to the feelings of the multitude. They pre-suppose no knowledge of the past—no cherished ideas habitually dwelt on by the imagination—no deep feeling of religion—no deep feeling of patriotism—but merely a capacity for the most common sympathies and sensibilities of human nature. The picture makes no demand on the previous habits or ideas of the spectator—it tells its own story, and it tells it entirely—but exactly in proportion as it wants retrospective interest, I am inclined to think it wants endurance of interest. I think Wilkie's species of painting may be said to bear the same relation to the highest species, which sentimental comedies and farces bear to regular tragedies. But in all this, as I have already hinted, it is probable the public is most to blame—not the painter. Indeed, the very greatest artists, were they to go on making creations either in painting, poetry, or any other art, without being guided by the responses of public enthusiasm, would run a sad risk of losing their way. The genius of a gifted individual—his power of inventing and conceiving—is an instrument which he himself may not always have the judgment to employ to the best advantage, and which is more safely directed to its mark by the aggregated feelings, I will not say, of *the* multitude, but at least of numbers. Even the scattered suffrages of amateurs, who, by artificial culture, have acquired habits of feeling different from those of the people about them, must always be a very trifling stimulus, when compared with the trumpet-notes of a whole nation, hailing an artist for having well expressed ideas alike interesting to them all. There is no popular sympathy in these days with those divinest feelings of the human soul, which formed the essence of interest in the works of the sculptors of Greece—still more in those of the painters of modern Italy—and the expression of which was rewarded in both cases by the enthusiasm, boundless and grateful, of those by whom these artists were habitually surrounded.

I confess, there are very few things of which I am so desirous, as of seeing a true school of painting, in its highest form, established among the people of Britain. But this can never be, till the painters get rid of that passion for *inventing* subjects, which at present seems to predominate among them all. The object of a great painter should be, not to invent subjects, but to give a graphical form to ideas universally known, and contemplated with deep feeling. An Entombing of Christ—a Madonna and Child—a Flight into Egypt, are worth all the *larmoyant* scenes which can ever be conceived out of the circumstances of modern life—circumstances, which, although they may be treated with the utmost genius, can never cease to be, in the main, prosaic. Even the early history of any modern nation, however replete it may be with remarkable events, can present no objects of which the imagination, set a musing by the contemplation of its likeness, does not speedily find the limits, and the barrenness—from which, in a word, it does not turn away as unpoetical, after the first movements of excited curiosity and week-day sympathies have ceased. How different from all this narrowness, is the endless and immeasurable depth of a Religious Allegory, wherein the whole mystery of man and his destiny is called up to breathe its solemn and unfading charm upon the creation of the artist, and the mind of the spectator!

When one talks to a painter of the present day about the propriety of taking to subjects of religious import—above all, to those of the simplest construction, and the most purely allegorical nature—there is nothing more common than to be told, that such subjects have been exhausted. If you are told, by way of confirmation of this, that the Scriptural pieces produced in this country are almost all very bad, you are, indeed, told nothing but the truth; because they are made up of insipid centos and compilations from former painters, or absurd misapplications of the plastic antique. Having no real life or expression in them, they are universally regarded with indifference; and probably the grossest violations of costume, and the most vulgar forms, are better than this.

Rembrandt, in painting Scriptural subjects, took such forms and dresses as his own country supplied, and his compositions were esteemed, because, whatever might be their want of dignity, they were at least pregnant with traits of which his countrymen understood the meaning. The fundamental ideas conveyed, had a religious interest, and the vehicles made use of to express them, were, in a certain sense, good, because they were national, and not mere garbled recollections of ancient pictures and statues, made up into new forms and groupes, utterly destitute of coherence and truth. Paul Veronese made use of Venetian figures and dresses in treating the most sacred subjects, and although these violations of costume may appear ridiculous at first sight, yet, if we reflect a little, we shall perhaps find that it was the most judicious course he could have pursued. To make use of such nature as is before us, is always to secure consistency and truth of expression. There is, besides, a noble sincerity and simplicity in each nation, making use of such physiognomies and scenery as it is best acquainted with, to serve as the means of expressing ideas eternally to be loved and adored, in whatever way they may be represented. If I were a painter, and were engaged in painting Scripture pieces, I would boldly make use of such physiognomies and scenery as my country affords, and would think the surest way of exciting an interest in such performances, would be, through the medium of common associations and well-known appearances, applied to subjects radically great and dignified in themselves.

But all this poverty of modern artists, has no weight as an argument against the use of religious subjects. Any one who has gone through even a few of the great collections at home, must be satisfied that Christian subjects have been by no means exhausted by the Ancient Masters. Even in any one of the subjects, of which these were most fond, there is no appearance, as if any one definite conception had ever come to be regarded as the truest or best way of treating it—far less as precluding the attempts of succeeding artists. It is the

more lamentable, when one looks back upon this endless fertility of the old, to think of the narrow-minded prejudice which has barred the new painters from the same inexhaustible ranges of ideas and subjects. Before the imitation can ever be imagined to have reached its limit, we must suppose that we have ascertained the limit of that which it proposes to imitate. Now where is the man, however ardent an admirer of the genius of the great dead masters he may be—however deeply and passionately he may worship the divine spirit which animated their works, and immortalizes their memories—where is the man who can persuade himself for a moment, that, in expressing the gestures and features of divine beings, or beings partaking of sanctity above the conception of ordinary men, any one of those masters has gone as far as it is possible to go? The best of their productions only take us so far—there is always a deeper path, which the imagination must travel in its own light alone—and where is the certainty that this path may not be abridged—that some yet nearer approach may not be made to that, which, even by the greatest of men, seems to have been seen afar off at an immeasurable distance? At all events, the result would be so grand, that the attempt is well worthy of being made by every artist who feels in himself the stirrings and the consciousness of genius. How natural and how fine a thing for a painter to desire to follow in the same path wherein Raphael, and Lionardo, and Perugino have preceded him—to transplant himself anew into their ideas and their thoughts—to walk yet farther under the guidance of the same unwearied spirit which conducted them—and so to restore the broken links of connection between the art of past ages and the art of the present! And then how rich—how comprehensive is their sphere in all beauty which painting can need, in all expression after which the heart of man pants in its moments of reflective earnestness! What a lamentable contrast is that which the present condition of the art affords—how insecurely and unsatisfied the artist seems to be wandering about from one set of unfortunate subjects to another set yet more unfortunate!

The old masters did not merely imagine themselves to possess a sufficient field for all the rich inventiveness of their genius, within the story and allegory of the Bible—they seem to have been satisfied not unfrequently with a very small portion of the space which this mighty field afforded—nay, to have been contented, month after month, year after year, and life-time after life-time, with some one little fragment of the whole—sometimes such as we should scarcely suppose it possible for them to have esteemed the best or richest in their power. Instead of seeking about for new subjects, they seem often to have formed such a love for some one subject as never, or, at least, seldom to leave it—unwearied in their admiration—in the intense fervour of their passionate love. It is thus that the divine Raphael seems to have delighted in manifold representations of the Madonna—each of them possessing an individual character—and yet each an aspiration of the same glorious spirit, after the same intangible evanescent divinity of conception. The far less lofty subject of the Herodias appears, in like manner, to have become a perfect common place in all the school of Lionardo; while in the Crucifixion the soul of the great Durer seems to have found a more fitting theme on which to expend the ever unsatisfied, but never despairing depth of its melancholy musing sublimity. If it be true, that these men have exhausted any thing, assuredly this is a discovery which neither themselves, nor any of their immediate disciples and most intelligent admirers, ever dreamed of.

Although, however, *Religion* and the aspiration after the *Godlike*, was always the great centre spring of the ideas and endeavours of the old Italian Masters, there was another wide field upon which they moved with a grace and a freedom, no less superior to any thing that is ever exhibited by modern artists—a field which has been less deserted by modern artists, and which they never do pretend to speak of as having been exhausted by those who preceded them—the Mythology of the Greeks. So far as I have been able to form any ideas concerning the Spirit of Greek antiquity, I am of opinion

that that Spirit—the internal being and essence of ancient Life and ancient Faith, was comprehended in a far more happy and more profound way by the old Italian painters—more, indeed, in all probability, from deep instinctive feeling of what is right and true, than from any great knowledge or learning—than ever seems to be attained to by any modern painters either of Italy, or Germany, or England—least of all by those of the most would-be-classical school in the world—the French. It might be reckoned unfair to draw any comparisons, or expect that any should be drawn, between the gigantic genius of Michael Angelo, and the mind of any painter of our day, or, indeed, of any of the ages that have elapsed between Michael Angelo's time and our own. The School of Athens of Raphael, in like manner, would be rejected as beyond the fair limit of comparison. But it is not necessary to seek for the confirmation of what I have said, in the works of such men as Bounarotti and Raphael alone. The Roman power, fulness, and magnificence of Julio Romano, and the fine voluptuousness in the Antiope of Coreggio, are things clearly derived from deeper sources than any which our modern painters ever dream of exploring. And yet all these painters considered the Christian Allegory as the only true subject on which to expend the full resources of their genius—This Greek Mythology, in which they found things so much deeper than any that modern painters can find there—was only regarded by them as a by-field of relaxation—a mere παίγνιον of their art. They viewed the subject of antiquity far more profoundly than their successors do, but they always kept it in complete subjection to their own more serious and loftier faith. They sought in it only for allegories, conceptions, and images of a less overwhelming dignity than the Bible could afford, and they treated these pretty much as the old romantic poets did the fables of antiquity. The God Amor of the Provençals, is, perhaps, not much more different from the Eros of the Greeks, than the Mentegna is from the true Athenian Hermes. Perhaps one of the finest exemplifications of the success with

which modern art may make use of ancient mythology, is in the famous picture of the Contest of Virtue and Pleasure, by Perugino. It was in the Louvre a few years ago: I know not where it is now. The extremities of the fore-ground are occupied by two glorious trees, the one of bright and blooming foliage, on which some Cupids are seen tangled amidst the blossoms and fruit—the other is a dark and melancholy cypress, on one of whose barest branches an owl is perched, with its wings folded. Female figures with lances, the points of which terminate in flames, contend on the side of Love, others against him. Nothing can be finer than the diversity of attitudes among the combatants—the very soul of antique luxury, and the very soul of antique severity, seem to have been caught by the pencil of the artist. The detail of the picture I have in a great measure forgotten, but the general effect I never shall—above all, the grand blue mountains in the distance, seen on the one side, over woods and wilds, full of satyrs and nymphs, and, in the other, a magnificent landscape of temples and towers, rising calmly out of solemn and orderly groves, such as we might imagine to have given shelter to the Platos and the Ciceros. A modern painter would probably have confined himself, in handling such a subject, to some merely plastic groupe, in which form would have been almost every thing—expression little—and accompaniment nothing.

Above all Scottish artists with whose works I am acquainted, I should like to see Mr. Allan deserting the narrow field of modern art, and merely vulgar interest—and attempting once more to paint Scripture subjects as they deserve to be painted. The gentle and delicate character of his genius, seems not unworthy of being applied to the divinely benevolent allegories of our faith—or, if these be too much for him, to the simple, beautiful, unfailing situations of actual life, which the Bible history presents in such overflowing abundance. Should he be afraid of venturing so far from the ordinary themes in which spectators are now accustomed to find interest—the history of his country affords a fine field, which

may be looked upon as intermediate between that on which he has as yet trodden, and that on which I would fain have him feel the ambition to tread. In taking hold of religious subjects in Scotland, he would undoubtedly have to contend (over and above the prejudices of which I have already spoken) with another set of prejudices, scarcely less difficult to be overcome—those, I mean, of a nation among whom Religion is commonly regarded in a way by far too speculative, and too little imbued with pure and beautiful feeling. It was worthy only of the savage soul of Knox, to banish all the most delightful of the arts from the house of God—to degrade for ever those arts from their proper purpose and destination, among the people whose Faith and Worship he reformed, only because his own rude (though masculine) mind wanted grace to comprehend what their true purposes, and destinations, and capacities are. This was indeed the triumph of a bigot, who had neither an eye nor a heart for Beauty. The light of the man's virtues should not be forgotten; but why should an enlightened nation continue to punish themselves by walking in the cold shadow of his prejudices?

But the old history of Scotland abounds in scenes of the most romantic and poetic interest; and the self-love of the nation, debarred from any exclusive pride in achievements of later days, atones for this to itself by a more accurate knowledge of the national past, and a more fervent interest in the men and actions the national history discloses, than are commonly to be found among nations whose independent existence has continued unbroken, down to the present day. Here, then, is a rich field, to which Mr. Allan may turn, not only without prejudices to encounter, but with the whole prejudices of his nation eminently interested in his endeavours, and, if he succeed, (as why should he not?) eminently and enthusiastically delighted in his success. I hope the Murder of Archbishop Sharpe is designed as the first of a great and magnificent series of Scottish Paintings; but I think it would have been better to choose, as the subject of the first of such a series, some scene which the whole of the Scottish nation might have

been more likely to contemplate with the same species of emotions.

P. M.

LETTER L.

TO THE SAME.

The length to which I have extended my remarks on *Mr.* Allan's pictures, may, perhaps, appear a little extravagant; but I think, upon the whole, that these pictures, and this artist, form one of the most interesting subjects which can, at the present time, attract the attention of a traveller in Scotland, and therefore I do not repent of the *lengthiness* of my observations. I wish I had been able to treat the subject more as it deserves to be treated in some other respects.

The truth is that till Wilkie and Allan arose, it can scarcely be said Scotland had ever given any promise of expressing her national thoughts and feelings, by means of the pencil, with any degree of power and felicity at all approaching to that in which she has already often made use of the vehicle of words—or even to that which she had displayed in her early music. Before this time, the poverty of Scotland, and the extreme difficulty of pictorial education, as contrasted with the extreme facility of almost every other kind of education, had been sufficient to prevent the field of art from ever attracting the sympathies and ambition of the young men of genius in this country; and the only exceptions to this rule are such as cannot fail to illustrate, in a very striking way, the general influence of its authority. Neither can I be persuaded to think, that the only exceptions which did exist, were at all very splendid ones. The only two Scottish painters of former times, of whom any of the Scotch connoisseurs, with whom I have conversed, seem to speak with much exultation, are Gavin Hamilton and Runciman. The

latter, although he was far inferior in the practice of art—although he knew nothing of colouring, and very little of drawing—yet, in my opinion, possessed much more of the true soul of a painter than the former. There is about his often miserably drawn figures, and as often miserably arranged groupes, a certain rude character of grandeur, a certain indescribable majesty and originality of conception, which shows at once, that had he been better educated, he might have been a princely painter. The other possessed, in perfection, all the manual part of his art—he made no mistakes—he was sure so far as he went—he had the complete mastery of his tools. The subjects which he chose, too, were admirable, and in his treatment of many of them altogether, he has displayed a union of talents, which few, even of the very first artists the world has produced, could ever equal. But Gavin Hamilton was not a great painter. Nature never meant him to be one. He wanted soul to conceive, and therefore his hands, so ready and so skilful to execute, were of little avail. I have seen many of his works in Italy—as yet, none of them here; for the artist always lived in Italy, and very few of his paintings have ever, I believe, reached the country of his birth. At a late period of his life, indeed, he came to Scotland, where he was possessed of a considerable paternal estate, had a painting-room fitted up in his house, and resolved to spend the remainder of his days among his countrymen. But great as he really was, in many respects, and great above all comparison as he must have appeared, or, at least, was entitled to appear in Scotland *then*, he found little sympathy and little enthusiasm to sustain and reward his labours; and, after painting a few large pictures for the Duke of Hamilton, (with whose family he was nearly connected,) Gavin returned once more to Rome—never to leave it again. There indeed he enjoyed a high and brilliant reputation. He was a kind of Mengs among the cognoscenti, and his name, like that of Mengs, was rendered celebrated throughout the continent by the praises of French travellers and Italian ciceroni. But Mengs has since been reduced to his due dimen-

sions; and Gavin Hamilton could have no reason to complain that he has suffered the same fate, although indeed it is very true, the dimensions to which he has been reduced, are yet smaller than those of Mengs. Such is the invariable destiny of all but the true demi-gods. For his own living hour, each may possess all the expansion of popular renown; but, when they come to take their place among the great assembly of the illustrious dead,

> "Behold a wonder! they but now who seemed
> In bigness to surpass Earth's giant sons,
> Now less than smallest dwarfs, in narrow room
> Throng numberless."——

Even the raptures of Voltaire can no longer persuade men that either Mengs or Hamilton were worthy representatives of the great painters of the centuries preceding.

It would seem, however, as if the first day-spring of art in Scotland had been enough to illuminate many regions besides those to which I have already alluded. For the first time in Scotland now possessed of admirable landscape painters, as well as of historical painters; and in the department of portrait, the progress she has made has been no less remarkable. With regard to landscape painting, it is very true, that she has not yet equalled the present glories of the sister kingdom —but then the world has only one TURNER, and Scotland comes far nearer to the country which has had the honour of producing that great genius, than any other country in Europe. She has reared many artists in this department, whose works are well known in England, and she has fixed the residence and affections of a countryman of our own, whose works, were they known as they deserve to be, would, I am persuaded, confer more pure delight on all that are capable of understanding and feeling their beauties, than it has almost ever fallen to the lot of any one artist to bestow upon his contemporaries.

I owe my first acquaintance with this painter to my friend W——, who is extremely fond of his company, no less than

of his pictures; but have since met him very often in the fashionable societies of the place. It is a singular enough coincidence, too, that Mr. Williams (for he is your namesake,) has owed scarcely less of his celebrity to his residence in foreign countries, and his choice of foreign subjects, than Mr. Allan has done. It is true, that he has long been known as an admirable landscape painter, and, I think, you must have seen some of his works in Wales, as well as in London; but it was not till last year, when Mr. Williams returned to Edinburgh, after travelling for some years in Italy and Greece, that his genius seems to have displayed itself in its utmost power. Familiar as he had all his life been with the beauty and the grandeur of mountains, lakes, and rivers, and skilful as he had shown himself in transfusing their shapes and their eloquence to his canvass—there seem to have slumbered in his breast the embers of a nobler fire, which never burst into a flame until he had gazed upon the majestic face of nature, in lands, where her majesty borrows a holier and sublimer influence from the memory of men and actions, in comparison with which the greatest of modern men, and the most brilliant of modern actions, must be contented to appear as dim and pigmy. Even Italy, for there was the scene of his first wanderings, seems to have wanted the power to call forth this hidden spark into its full radiance. It was reserved for the desolate beauty of Greece, to breathe into this fine spirit such a sense of the melancholy splendour of Nature, in climes where she was once no less gay than splendid—such a deep and touching sympathy, with the decays of earthly greatness, and the vanity of earthly ambition—such a mournful tenderness of feeling and of pencil, as have been sufficient to render him at once one of the most original, one of the most impressive, and one of the most delightful of painters.

Surely I am a lover of nature; but I confess, that pictured representations of external nature, when linked with no subject of human action or passion, have, in general, been able to produce, comparatively, but little effect upon my mind. The paintings of Claude, indeed, always affected me in the

most powerful manner; but then, I think, the idea that the scene was in Italy, and the shapes of Roman aqueducts, towers, and temples, gleaming beneath his sunny lustre, or more gentle moonlight, always entered very largely into the deep gratification I received from contemplating them. The same kind of instruments of excitement have been far more liberally employed by Williams, than by any of the great painters with whose works I am acquainted—and besides, the scenes of Greece, and the desolation of Greece, are things to my mind of yet nobler power than any of which even Claude had command. It is there—I may be wrong in confessing it—it is there, among the scattered pillars of Thebes or Corinth—or in full view of all the more glorious remains of more glorious Athens—or looking from the ivied and mouldering arches of Delphi, quite up through the mountain mists of the craggy summits of Parnassus, and the far off windings of the Castalian brook—it is there, that the footsteps of men appear to have stamped a grander sanctity even on the most magnificent forms of nature. It is there that Williams seems first to have felt, and it is in his transcripts of these glorious scenes, that I myself have been sensible of feeling the whole fulness and awfulness of the works of the Creator—

> —All this magnificent effect of power,
> The earth we tread, the sky which we behold
> By day, and all the pomp which night reveals.

As yet Mr. Williams has not had time to finish many pictures from the sketches he made in Greece; but, for the most part, these sketches are, in themselves, most charming pictures; for, in spite of the fierce suns which all preceding travellers dreaded and shunned as much as possible, and which no preceding painter ever braved, it was his custom to colour his sketches upon the spot where they were made. The effects which he has thus produced are so very new, that, but for the certainty one has in regard to the mode of their production, it is not to be denied, they would appear somewhat extravagant. I have wandered over all the scenes of deserted grandeur

in Southern France and Italy—but these Greek ruins make their appearance in a style of majestic splendour, for which my eyes were totally unprepared. The action of the atmosphere upon the marble seems to have been quite different here from any thing I have ever witnessed elsewhere; and this, taken together with the dazzling brightness reflected from innumerable fields of waving mustard, has thrown such a breadth of yellow radiance around the crumbling monuments of wisdom and valour, that the eye starts back at first, as if from the glare of the sun in half-complete eclipse. By degrees, however, the intense truth of the representation forces its way into one's heart, and you gaze with your hand over your eyes upon the golden decline of Athens, with the same unquestioning earnestness, as if you were transported, all at once, to one of the sunny slopes of Hymettus. I speak of Athens—for it is there surely that the artist must have felt most, and it is in the large picture he has already finished of Athens, that the spirit of the place, the *Religio Loci*, seems to have infused its deepest charm into the pencil of the worshipper. Before you lies a long level of green and yellow grain, broken everywhere by tufted plantations of vines and olives—with here and there a solitary oak or sycamore, lifting itself broader and browner above their underwood—in the midst of which the gigantic Corinthian columns, of what was once the Temple of Jupiter, form a resting-place of radiance half way between you and the city. The low roofs and fantastic outlines of the houses of the modern city spread along the verge of the hill, and separate it from the fore-ground; but the majestic remains behind seem to acknowledge little connection with the works of modern men, which intervene between us and their surpassing beauty. The whole brow of the Acropolis still beams with a labyrinth of splendour, which, at first glance, you could hardily suspect to be in decay—with such noble decision of outline do these yellow pillars break the sky behind them—towers, and gateways, and temples, and domes, and porticos, all gleaming together on the summit, in the same warmth of radiance that shone upon them when Pericles

walked thither to offer up incense before the new-made masterpiece of Phidias. The Temple of Theseus stands lower down, more entire than the Parthenon, but half lost in the shadow of the Acropolis. Behind, through a rich and wooded plain that stretches to the sea, the eye may trace some lingering vestiges of what once were the long walls of the Piræus. The sea itself sleeps bright and blue beyond—beneath a bright sky, where not one speck of cloud is seen to hover above the glorious landscape. Far behind lies Salamis, and farther still Ægina.—In the centre of the piece, on the left hand, a small sheep-track, scarcely discernible among the mossy green, shows where once lay the high road to Marathon. To the right, close beneath where you stand, a group of Turks and Albanians are clustered together, with all the glaring hues of their barbaric splendour, by a clear small pool—

> "Thy banks, Cephisus, and the crystal lymph,
> With which thou dost refresh the thirsty lips,
> And moisten all day long these flowery fields."

What a landscape is here! how naked of men, yet how impregnated with the essence of humanity!

> Τας ἱερας ὁπας προσει-
> -ποιμην Ασιας.—

And yet perhaps the view from Castri may be a still more delightful one, and fitted perhaps to kindle yet deeper emotions. Here there is no pomp of ruins, no sweep of deserted richness, nothing but a few moss-grown tablets and columns beneath our feet, and before us, the mountain of inspiration, lifting its clear head high among the clouds, far above all its sweeping girdle of rocks and pines. It was here that the religion of Greece had its seat and centre—it was from hence that the Oracle of Apollo once dictated to all the kings of Asia—and that far later, even the relics of its power were sufficient to protect its soil from the foot of the spoiler—when

"The Gaul-King before Delphi lay."

The streams of Castalie glitter in the distance, and a single snow-white heifer, the only living thing in all the picture, browses upon the tall grass and wall-flowers, that spring from out the centre of the long silent sanctuary. A certain dim and sultry vapour of mystery seems to sleep upon every thing around—a dreamy mistiness of atmosphere, fit mother and fit nurse for the most fanciful and graceful of superstitions.

—In that fair clime, the lonely hersdman stretched
On the soft grass through half a summer's day,
With music lulled his indolent repose:
And in some fit of weariness, if he,
When his own breath was silent, chanced to hear
A distant strain, far sweeter than the sounds
Which his poor skill could make, his fancy fetched,
Even from the blazing chariot of the sun,
A beardless youth, who touched a golden lute,
And filled the illumined groves with ravishment.

The nightly hunter, lifting up his eyes
Toward the crescent Moon with grateful heart,
Called on the lovely wanderer, who bestowed
That timely light, to share his joyous sport:
And hence a beaming goddess with her nymphs,
Across the lawn, and through the darksome grove,
(Not unaccompanied with tuneful notes,
By echo multiplied from rock or cave,)
Swept in the storm of chase, as Moon and Stars
Glance rapidly along the cloudy Heavens,
When winds are blowing strong:
———— The traveller slaked
His thirst from rill or gushing fount, and thanked
The Naiad.—Sunbeams upon distant hills,
Gliding apace with shadows in their train,
Might, with small help from fancy, be transformed
Into fleet Oreads sporting visibly;
The Zephyrs fanning as they passed their wings,
Lacked not for love fair objects, which they wooed
With gentle whisper. Withered boughs grotesque
Stripped of their leaves and twigs by hoary age,
From depth of shaggy covert, peeping forth
In the low vale, or on steep mountain side:
And sometimes intermixed with stirring horns

Of the lise deer, or goats' depending beard;
These were the lurking Satyrs, a wild brood
Of gamesome Deities, or Pan himself,
The simple Shepherd's awe-inspiring God!

When Williams has finished a few more pictures such as these, I have no doubt it will be found, that his genius is entitled to exert a deep sway over the minds of his contemporaries. It seems as if nature had fitted him to complete among us the impression, which similar inspirations had already enabled one of the greatest poets of the day to introduce to us with so much majesty of effect.

But the length of these remarks must not lead you to suppose, that there are no great landscape painters in Edinburgh besides Mr. Williams. He is the only one whom I have met frequently in society, and perhaps his very elegant appearance and manners, and the interest his wanderings have given to his conversation, may sufficiently account for this circumstance. But there is no want of admirable artists in the same department in this city. There is the venerable father of landscape painting in Scotland—Mr. Nasmyth, whose son Peter enjoys a splendid reputation at present in London. There is a delightful sweetness in the old man's pencil, and assuredly there is in it as yet no want of vigour. There is Mr. Thomson, the clergyman of Duddingston, a village in the immediate neighbourhood of Edinburgh, whose works, in masterly ease and breadth of effect, seem to me to approach nearer to the masterpieces of Turner, than those of any other artist with whom I am acquainted, and who, you will be happy to observe, is engaged along with that Prince of Artists in Mr. Scott's great work of the Provincial Antiquities of Scotland. Among the younger artists, there are, I believe, not a few of very great promise, and one, above all, who bids fair ere long to rival the very highest masters in the department he has selected. I allude to Staff-Surgeon Schetky, a gentleman, whose close and eminent attention to his own profession, both here and while he served with Lord Wellington's army, have not prevented him from cultivating with

uniform ardour an art fitted above all others to form a delightful relaxation from the duties of professional men, and which, it is easy to see, must besides be of great practical and direct utility to a man of his profession. During the longest and most fatiguing marches of our Peninsular army, his active and intelligent mind was still fresh in its worshipping of the forms of nature; finding its best relief from the contemplation of human suffering, in the contemplation of those serene beauties of earth and sky, which that lovely region for ever offers to the weary eye of man. I think the Doctor is a very original painter. He has looked on nature with an eye that is entirely his own, and he has conceived the true purposes of his art in a way that is scarcely less peculiar. He seems to have the most exalted views of the poetical power of landscape-painting, and to make it his object on every occasion to call this poetical power into action in his works. He does not so much care to represent merely striking or beautiful scenes, as to characterize natural objects, and bring out their life and expression. A painter, who feels, as he does, what nature is, considers every tree or plant as in some measure an animated being, which expresses the tone of its sensations by the forms which it assumes, and the colours which it displays. How full of poetry and meaning is every vegetable production, when sprouting forth spontaneously in such places as nature dictates, and growing in the way to which it is led by its own silent inclinations! Even the different surfaces and shapes of soils and rocks have an expression relating to the manner in which they were formed, although they cannot be literally considered as expressive of sensation like plants. Mr. Schetky seems more than almost any painter to be imbued with these ideas of universal animation. His trees—his rocks—his Pyrenees, seem to breathe and be alive with the spirit of their Maker; and he has no superior, but one, in every thing that regards the grand and mysterious eloquence of cloud and sky.

As you have seen the London Exhibitions as often as myself, you of course do not need to be told, that, in Raeburn,

Edinburgh possesses a portrait-painter, whose works would do honour to any capital in Europe. I really am not certain, that this artist is in any important particular inferior even to Sir Thomas Lawrence. He also is an old man; but the splendid example of his career has raised about him several, that seem destined to tread in his steps with gracefulness scarcely less than his own. Such, in particular, are Mr. Geddes, whose fine potrait of Mr. Wilkie has lately been engraved in London—Mr. John Watson, a very young artist, but (I prophesy) not far from very splendid reputation—a most chaste colourist, and one that wants nothing but a little more practice to be in all things a Raeburn—and, lastly, Mr. Nicholson, whose delicate taste in conceiving a subject, and general felicity in executing it, do not always receive so much praise as they should, on account of a little carelessness in regard to drawing, which might be very easily corrected. You must have seen many etchings from his pictures. Mr. Nicholson is also a very charming miniature-painter; indeed, he has no rival in that department but Mr. William Thomson, a truly delicious master in this style.

Ever your's,
P. M.

P. S. You must not expect to hear from me again for several days, as I am to set off to-morrow morning to pay my promised visit to Mr. S——. I shall write you immediately on my return to Edinburgh.

Pray, is there any truth in the neswspaper paragraph about Sir Watkin?—Give my love to Lucy—"*Quid Luce clarius?*"

LETTER LI.

TO THE SAME.

OMAN'S.

* * * * *

* * * * *

After passing the town of Dalkeith, and all along the skirts of the same lovely tract of scenery on the Esk, which I have already described to you, the road to A——d leads for several miles across a bare and sterile district, where the progress of cultivation has not yet been able to change much of the general aspect of the country. There are, however, here and there some beatiful little valleys cutting the desert—in one of which, by the side of a small mountain stream, whose banks are clothed every where with a most picturesque abundance of blooming furze, the old Castle of Borthwick is seen projecting its venerable Keep, unbroken apparently, and almost undecayed, over the few oaks which still seem to linger like so many frail faithful vassals around the relics of its grandeur. When I passed by this fine ruin, the air was calm and the sky unclouded, and the shadow of the square massy pile lay in all its clear breadth upon the blue stream below; but Turner has caught or created perhaps still more poetical accompaniments, and you may see it to at least as much advantage as I did, in his magnificent delineation.*

Shortly after this the view becomes more contracted, and the road winds for some miles between the hills—while, upon the right, you have close by your side a modest little rivulet, increasing, however, every moment in breadth and boldness. This is the infant *Gala Water*—so celebrated in the pastoral poetry of Scotland—flowing on to mingle its tributary stream with the more celebrated Tweed. As you approach, with it,

* In the first Number of the Provincial Antiquities of Scotland.

the great valley of that delightful river, the hills become more and more beautiful in their outlines, and where they dip into the narrow plain, their lower slopes are diversified with fine groupes of natural wood—hazel—ash—and birch, with here and there some drooping, mouldering oaks and pines, the scanty relics of that once mighty *Forest*, from which the whole district still takes its name. At last, the Gala makes a sudden turn, and instead of

> "The grace of forest charms decayed,
> And pastoral melancholy,"

you have a rich and fertile vale, covered all over with nodding groves and luxuriant verdure, through which the Gala winds proudly toward the near end of its career. I crossed it at the thriving village of Galashiels, and pursued my journey for a mile or two on its right bank—being told, that I should thus save a considerable distance—for the usual road goes round about for the sake of a bridge, which, in the placid seasons of the Tweed, is quite unnecessary. I saw this far-famed river for the first time, with the turrets of its great poet's mansion immediately beyond it, and the bright foilage of his young larches reflected half-way over in its mirror.

You cannot imagine a more lovely river—it is as clear as the tiniest brook you ever saw, for I could count the white pebbles as I passed—and yet it is broad and deep, and above all extremely rapid; and although it rises sometimes to a much greater height, it seems to fill the whole of its bed magnificently. The ford of which I made use, is the same from which the house takes its name, and a few minutes brought me to its gates. Ere I came to it, however, I had time to see that it is a strange fantastic structure, built in total defiance of all those rules of uniformity to which the modern architects of Scotland are so much attached. It consists of one large tower, with several smaller ones clustering around it, all built of fine grey granite—their roofs diversified abundantly with all manner of antique chimney-tops, battlements, and turrets—the windows placed here and there with

appropriate irregularity, both of dimension and position,—and the spaces between or above them not unfrequently occupied with saintly niches, and chivalrous coats-of-arms. Altogether it bears a close resemblance to some of our true old English manor-houses, in which the forms of religious and warlike architecture are blended together with no ungraceful mixture. But I have made a sketch with my pencil, which will give you a better notion of its exterior, than any written description. The interior is perfectly in character—but I dare say, you would turn the leaf were I to detain you any longer from the lord of the place, and I confess you are right in thinking him "metal more attractive."

I did not see Mr. S——, however, immediately on my arrival; he had gone out with all his family, to show the Abbey of Melrose to the Count von B——, and some other visitors. I was somewhat dusty in my apparel, (for the shandrydan had moved in clouds half the journey,) so I took the opportunity of making my toilet, and had not quite completed it, when I heard the trampling of their horses' feet beneath the window. But in a short time having finished my adonization, I descended, and was conducted to Mr. S——, whom I found by himself in his library. Nothing could be kinder than his reception of me,—and so simple and unassuming are his manners, that I was quite surprised, after a few minutes had elapsed, to find myself already almost at home in the company of one, whose presence I had approached with feelings so very different from those with which a man of my age and experience is accustomed to meet ordinary strangers. There is no kind of rank, which I should suppose it so difficult to bear with perfect ease, as the universally-honoured nobility of universally-honoured genius; but all this sits as lightly and naturally upon this great man, as ever a plumed casque did upon the head of one of his own graceful knights. Perhaps, after all, the very highest dignity may be more easily worn than some of the inferior degrees—as it has often been said of princes. My Lord Duke is commonly a much more homely person than the Squire of the Parish—or

your little spick-and-span new Irish Baron. And good heavens! what a difference between the pompous Apollo of some Cockney coterie, and the plain, manly, thorough-bred courtesy of a W—— S——!

There was a large party at dinner, for the house was full of company, and much very amusing and delightful conversation passed on every side around me; but you will not wonder that I found comparatively little leisure either to hear or see much of any thing besides my host. And as to his person, in the first place—that was almost perfectly new to me, although I must have seen, I should suppose, some dozens of engravings of him before I ever came to Scotland. Never was any physiognomy treated with more scanty justice by the portrait-painters—and yet, after all, I must confess that the physiognomy is of a kind that scarcely falls within the limits of their art. I have never seen any face which disappointed me less than this, after I had become acquainted with it fully—yet, at the first glance, I certainly saw less than, but for the vile prints, I should have looked for—and I can easily believe that the feelings of the uninitiated—the uncranioscopical observer, might be little different from those of pure disappointment. It is not that there is deficiency of expression in any part of Mr. S——'s face, but the expression which is most prominent, is not of the kind which one who had known his works, and had heard nothing about his appearance, would be inclined to expect. The common language of his features expresses all manner of discernment and acuteness of intellect, and the utmost nerve and decision of character. He smiles frequently, and I never saw any smile which tells so eloquently the union of broad good humour, with the keenest perception of the ridiculous—but all this would scarcely be enough to satisfy one in the physiognomy of W—— S——. And, indeed, in order to see much finer things in it, it is only necessary to have a little patience,

——"And tarry for the hour,
When the Wizard shows his power;
The hour of might and mastery,
Which none may show but only he."

In the course of conversation, he happened to quote a few lines from one of the old Border Ballads, and looking round, I was quite astonished with the change which seemed to have passed over every feature in his countenance. His eyes seemed no longer to glance quick and grey from beneath his impending brows, but were fixed in their expanded eye-lids with a sober, solemn lustre. His mouth (the muscles about which are at all times wonderfully expressive,) instead of its usual language of mirth, or benevolence, or shrewdness, was filled with a sad and pensive earnestness. The whole face was tinged with a glow that showed its lines in new energy and transparence, and the thin hair parting backward displayed in tenfold majesty his Shakspearian pile forehead. It was now that I recognized the true stamp of Nature on the Poet of Marmion—and looking back for a moment to the former expression of the same countenance, I could not choose but wonder at the facility with which one set of features could be made to speak things so different. But, after all, what are features, unless they form the index to the mind? and how should the eyes of him who commands a thousand kinds of emotion, be themselves confined to beam only with the eloquence of a few?

> "It was about the Lammas tide,
> When husbandmen do win their hay;
> The doughty Douglass he would ride
> Into England to drive a prey."

I shall certainly never forget the fine heroic enthusiasm of look, with which he spoke these lines—nor the grand melancholy roll of voice, which showed with what a world of thoughts and feelings every fragment of the old legend was associated within his breast. It seemed as if one single cadence of the ancestral strain had been charm enough to transport his whole spirit back into the very pride and presence of the moment, when the White Lion of the Percies was stained and trampled under foot beside the bloody rushes of Otterborne. The more than martial fervours of his kind-

led eye, were almost enough to give to the same lines the same magic in my ears; and I could half fancy that the portion of Scottish blood which is mingled in my veins, had begun to assert, by a more ardent throb, its right to partake in the triumphs of the same primitive allegiance.

While I was thus occupied, one of the most warlike of the Lochaber pibrochs began to be played in the neighbourhood of the room in which we were, and, looking toward the window, I saw a noble Highland piper parading to and fro upon the lawn in front of the house—the plumes of his bonnet—the folds of his plaid—and the streamers of his bag-pipe, all floating majestically about him in the light evening breeze. You have seen this magnificent costume, so I need not trouble you either with its description or its eulogy; but I am quite sure you never saw it where its appearance harmonized so delightfully with all the accompaniments of the scene. It is true, that it was in the Lowlands—and that there are other streams upon which the shadow of the tartans might fall with more of the propriety of mere antiquarianism, than on the Tweed. But the Scotch are right in not now-a-days splitting too much the symbols of their nationality; as they have ceased to be an independent people, they do wisely in striving to be as much as possible a united people. But here, above all, whatever was truly Scottish could not fail to be truly appropriate in the presence of the great genius to whom whatever is Scottish in thought, in feeling, or in recollection, owes so large a share of its prolonged, or reanimated, or ennobled existence. The poet of Roderick Dhu, and—under favour—the poet of Fergus Mac-Ivor, does well assuredly to have a piper among the retainers of his hospitable mansion. You remember, too, how he has himself described the feast of the Rhymer:—

> "Nor lacked they, as they sat at dine,
> *The Music*, nor the tale,
> Nor goblets of the blood-red wine,
> Nor mantling quaighs of ale."

After the Highlander had played some dozen of his tunes,

he was summoned, according to the ancient custom, to receive the thanks of the company. He entered *more militari*, without taking off his bonnet, and received a huge tass of aquavitæ from the hand of his master, after which he withdrew again—the most perfect solemnity all the while being displayed in his weather-beaten, but handsome and warlike Celtic lineaments. The inspiration of the generous fluid prompted one strain merrier than the rest, behind the door of the Hall, and then the piper was silent—his lungs, I dare say, consenting much more than his will, for he has all the appearance of being a fine enthusiast in the delights and dignity of his calling. So much for Roderick of Skye, for such I think is his style.

His performance seemed to diffuse, or rather to heighten, a charming flow of geniality over the whole of the party, but no where could I trace its influence so powerfully and so delightfully as in the Master of the Feast. The music of the hills had given a new tone to his fine spirits, and the easy playfulness with which he gave vent to their buoyancy, was the most delicious of contagions. Himself temperate in the extreme (some late ill health has made it necessary he should be so,) he sent round his claret more speedily than even I could have wished—(you see I am determined to blunt the edge of all your sarcasms)—and I assure you we were all too well employed to think of measuring our bumpers. Do not suppose, however, that there is any thing like display or formal leading in Mr. S——'s conversation. On the contrary, every body seemed to speak the more that he was there to hear—and his presence seemed to be enough to make every body speak delightfully—as if it had been that some princely musician had tuned all the strings, and even under the sway of more vulgar fingers, they could not choose but discourse excellent music. His conversation, besides, is for the most part of such a kind, that all can take a lively part in it, although, indeed, none that I ever met with can equal himself. It does not appear as if he ever could be at a loss for a single moment for some new supply of that which constitutes its

chief peculiarity, and its chief charm; the most keen perception, the most tenacious memory, and the most brilliant imagination, having been at work throughout the whole of his busy life, in filling his mind with a store of individual traits and anecdotes, serious and comic, individual and national, such as it is probable no man ever before possessed—and such, still more certainly, as no man of great original power ever before possessed in subservience to the purposes of inventive genius. A youth spent in wandering among the hills and valleys of his country, during which he became intensely familiar with all the lore of those grey-haired shepherds, among whom the traditions of warlike as well as of peaceful times find their securest dwelling place—or in more equal converse with the relics of that old school of Scottish cavaliers, whose faith had nerved the arms of so many of his own race and kindred—such a boyhood and such a youth laid the foundation, and established the earliest and most lasting sympathies of a mind, which was destined, in after years, to erect upon this foundation, and improve upon these sympathies, in a way of which his young and thirsting spirit could have then contemplated but little. Through his manhood of active and honoured, and now for many years of glorious exertion, he has always lived in the world, and among the men of the world, partaking in all the pleasures and duties of society as fully as any of those who had nothing but such pleasures and such duties to attend to. Uniting, as never before they were united, the habits of an indefatigable student with those of an indefatigable observer—and doing all this with the easy and careless grace of one who is doing so, not to task, but to gratify his inclinations and his nature—is it to be wondered that the riches of his various acquisitions should furnish a never-failing source of admiration even to those who have known him longest, and who know him best? As for me, enthusiastic as I had always been in my worship of his genius—and well as his works had prepared me to find his conversation rich to overflowing in all the elements of instruction as well as of amusement—I confess the

reality entirely surpassed all my anticipations, and I never despised the maxim *nil admirari* so heartily as now.

I can now say what I believe very few of my friends can do, that I have conversed with almost all the illustrious poets our contemporaries—indeed, Lord Byron is the only exception that occurs to me. Surely, I need not tell you that I met each and all of them with every disposition to be gratified—and now I cannot but derive great pleasure from being able to look back upon what I have so been privileged to witness, and comparing in my own mind their different styles of conversation. The most original and interesting, as might be supposed, in this point of view, are the same whose originality has been most conspicuous in other things—this great Poet of Scotland, and the great Poet of the Lakes. It is, indeed, a very striking thing, how much the conversation of each of these men harmonizes with the peculiar vein of his mind, as displayed in more elaborate shapes—how *one* and entire the impression is, which the totality of each of them is calculated to leave upon the mind of an honouring, but not a bigotted observer. In listening to Wordsworth, it is impossible to forget for a single moment that the author of the "Excursion" is before you. Poetry has been with him the pure sole business of life—he thinks of nothing else, and he speaks of nothing else—and where is the man who hears him, that would for a moment wish it to be otherwise? The deep sonorous voice in which he pours forth his soul upon the high secrets of his divine art—and those tender glimpses which he opens every now and then into the bosom of that lowly life, whose mysteries have been his perpetual inspirations—the sincere earnestness with which he details and expatiates—the innocent confidence which he feels in the heart that is submitted to his working—and the unquestioning command with which he seeks to fasten to him every soul that is capable of understanding his words—all these things are as they should be, in one that has lived the life of a hermit—musing, and meditating, and composing in the seclusion of a lonely cottage—loving and wor-

shipping the Nature of Man, but partaking little in the pursuits, and knowing little of the habits, of the Men of the World. There is a noble simplicity in the warmth with which he discourses to all that approach him, on the subject of which he himself knows most, and on which he feels most —and of which he is wise enough to know that every one must be most anxious to hear him speak. His poetry is the poetry of external nature and profound feeling; and *such is* the hold which these high themes have taken of his intellect, that he seldom dreams of descending to the tone in which the ordinary conversation of men is pitched. Hour after hour his eloquence flows on, by his own simple fireside, or along the breezy slopes of his own mountains, in the same lofty strain as in his loftiest poems—

> "Of Man and Nature, and of human life,
> His haunt, and the main region of his song."

His enthusiasm is that of a secluded artist; but who is he that would not rejoice in being permitted to peep into the sanctity of such a seclusion—or that, being there, would wish for a moment to see the enthusiasm that has sanctified it, suspended or interrupted in its work? The large, dim, pensive eye, that dwells almost forever upon the ground, and the smile of placid abstraction, that clothes his long, tremulous, melancholy lips, complete a picture of solemn, wrapped-up, contemplative genius, to which amid the dusky concussions of active men and common life, my mind reverts sometimes for repose as to a fine calm stretch of verdure in the bosom of some dark and hoary forest of venerable trees, where no voice is heard but that of the sweeping wind, and far-off waters:—what the Ettrick Shepherd finely calls

> ——— "Great Nature's hum,
> Voice of the desert, never dumb."

S——, again, is the very poet of active life, and that life, in all its varieties, lies forever stretched out before him,

bright and expanded, as in the glass of a magician. Whatever subject be mentioned, he at once steals a beam from his mirror, and scatters such a flood of illustration upon it, that you feel as if it had always been mantled in palpable night before. Every remark gains, as it passes from his lips, the precision of a visible fact, and every incident flashes upon your imagination, as if your bodily eye, by some new gift of nature, had acquired the power of seeing the past as vividly as the present. To talk of exhausting his light of *gramourie* to one that witnessed its play of radiance, would sound as absurd as to talk of drying up the Nile. It streams alike copiously, alike fervently upon all things, like the light of heaven, which "shineth upon the evil and upon the good." The eye and the voice, and the words and the gestures, seem all alike to be the ready unconscious interpreters of some imperial spirit, that moves irresistibly their mingled energies from within. There is no effort—no semblance of effort—but every thing comes out as is commanded—swift, clear, and radiant through the impartial medium. The heroes of the old times spring from their graves in panoply, and "drink the red wine through the helmet barred" before us; or

> "Shred their foemen's limbs away,
> As lops the woodman's knife the spray"—

—But they are honoured, not privileged—the humblest retainers quit the dust as full of life as they do—nay, their dogs and horses are partakers in the resurrection, like those of the Teutonic warriors in the Valhalla of Odin. It is no matter what period of his country's story passes in review. Bruce—Douglas—their Kingly Foe, in whose

> ——— "eye was set
> Some spark of the Plantagenet."

James—Mary—Angus—Montrose—Argyle—Dundee—these are all alike, not names, but realities—living, moving, breathing, feeling, speaking, looking realities—when he speaks of

them. The grave loses half its potency when he calls. His own imagination is one majestic sepulchre, where the wizard lamp burns in never-dying splendour, and the charmed blood glows forever in the cheeks of the embalmed, and every long-sheathed sword is ready to leap from its scabbard, like the Tizona of the Cid in the vault of Cardeña.

Of all this more anon.

P. M.

LETTER LII.

TO THE SAME.

Next morning I got up pretty early, and walked for at least two hours before breakfast, through the extensive young woods with which Mr. S—— has already clothed the banks of the Tweed, in every direction about his mansion. Nothing can be more soft and beautiful than the whole of the surrounding scenery—there is scarcely a single house to be seen, and, excepting on the rich low lands, close by the river, the country seems to be almost entirely in the hands of the shepherds. The green hills, however, all around the horizon, begin to be skirted with sweeping plantations of larch, pine, and oak; and the shelter which these will soon afford, must, no doubt, ere long, give a more agricultural aspect to the face of Tweeddale. To say the truth, I do not think with much pleasure of the prospect of any such changes.—I love to see tracts of countries, as well as races of men, preserving as much as possible of their old characteristics. There hovers at present over the most of this district, a certain delicious atmosphere of pastoral loneliness, and I think there would be something like sacrilege in disturbing it, even by things that elsewhere would confer interest as well as ornament.

After a breakfast *à la fourchette*, served up in the true style of old Scottish luxury, which a certain celebrated novelist

seems to take a particular pleasure in describing—a breakfast, namely, in which tea, coffee, chocolate, toast, and sweetmeats, officiated as little better than ornamental out-works to more solid and imposing fortifications of mutton-ham, hung-beef, and salmon killed over-night in the same spear and torch-light method, of which Dandie Dinmont was so accomplished a master—after doing all manner of justice to this interesting meal, I spent an hour with Mr. S—— in his library, or rather, in his closet; for, though its walls are quite covered with books, I believe the far more valuable part of his library is in Edinburgh. One end seemed to be devoted to books of Scots Law—which are necessary to him, no doubt, even here; for he is Chief Magistrate of the county—and, indeed, is known among the country people, who passionately love him, by no other name than that of "the Sherra." The other books, so far as I could see, were just what I should have expected to find Mr. S—— draw round him in his retirement—not the new and flashy productions of the day, but good plain copies of the old English Classics—above all, the historians and poets—together with a copious intermixture of black-letter romances, and Spanish ballads of chivalry, and several shelves entirely filled with the best collection I have ever seen of German *Volksmärchen* and *Volkslieder*. Among these, no doubt, his mind has found, at once, useful employment, and delightful relaxation.

We then mounted our horses, a numerous cavalcade, and rode to one of the three summits of the Eildon Hill, which rises out of the plain a little way behind A——d, and forms, in almost every point of view, a glorious back-ground to its towers and rising woods. We passed, before leaving Mr. S——'s territories, a deep dingle, quite covered with all manner of wild bushes, through which a little streamlet far below could, for the most part, be rather heard than seen. Mr. S—— paused at the rustic bridge which led us over this ravine, and told me, that I was treading on classical ground—that here was the *Huntly Burn*, by whose side Thomas the Rhymer of old saw the Queen of Faery riding in her glory,

and called to this hour by the shepherds, from that very circumstance, the *Bogle* or *Goblin Burn*. He then went on to repeat the fine words of the original *Prophesia Thomæ de Ercildoune*.

"In a land as I was lent,
In the gryking of the day,
Ay alone as I went
In Huntly bankys me for to play:
I saw the throstyl and the jay,
The mavis moved of her sange,
The wodwale sang notes gay,
That all the wood about range:
In that longing as I lay
Underneath a derne tree,
I was aware of a ladye fair
Cam riding over a fair lee—
Her palfray was dappil graye,
Such one saw never none,
As the sun in somer's day,
All about that ladye shone," &c. &c.

I could not but express my delight to find, that the scene of so many romantic recollections was included within the domains of the great inheritor of the glories of "True Thomas," and promised to myself to pay a more leisurely visit to Huntly Bank and the Goblin Burn. From this we passed right up the hill, the ponies here being as perfectly independent as our own of turnpike ways, and as scornful of perpendicular ascents. I was not a little surprised, however, with Mr. S——'s horsemanship—for, in spite of the lameness in one of his legs, he manages his steed with the most complete mastery, and seems to be as much at home in the saddle, as any of his own rough-riding Deloraines or Lochinvars could have been. He is, indeed, a very strong man in all the rest of his frame—the breadth and massiness of his iron muscles being evidently cast in the same mould with those of the old "Wats of Harden," and "Bauld Rutherfuirds that were fow stout." We took several ditches that would have astonished nine-tenths of the Epsom racers, and he was always foremost at the leap. All around the top of the hill, there

may be seen the remains of Roman walls and ditches, which seem to have been brought very low down in one direction, in order to inclose a fine well—and, indeed, the very peculiar outline of the Eildon, leaves no doubt, that it was the *Trimontium* of antiquity. The transitory visits of a few Roman legions, however, did not seem to me to confer much additional interest on this noble mountain, from whose summits the scenes of so many Scottish and English battles may be seen. The name of every hill and every valley all around is poetical, and I felt, as I heard them pointed out, one by one, as if so many old friends had been introduced to my acquaintance after a long absence, in which I had thought of them all a thousand times. To the left, at the foot of the hill, lies the picturesque village of Melrose, with the Abbots-Law, or Court-Mount, swelling close behind, and between it and the Tweed, the long grey arches of the magnificent Abbey itself. The river winds away for some miles among a rich succession of woods and lawns, at the end of which the fraternal towers of Dryburgh lift themselves from among their groves of elm.

——— "Dryborough, where with chiming Tweed
The lintwhites sing in chorus."

The back ground on this side consists, among other fine hills, of the Colding Knowes, so celebrated in Border song—on the other side, there is Ruberslaw, and the Carter, and Dunyon; and farther off, the Cheviots—and all between the beautiful windings of the Teviot. Right before my eye, Mr. S—— pointed out a small round tower, perched upon some irregular crags, at the distance of some few miles—Smaylholm Tower,—the scene of the Eve of St. John, and, what is still better, the scene of the early youth of the Poet himself. It was here, he told me, that in years of feebleness, which afforded little hope of the vigorous manhood which has followed them, he was entrusted to the care of some ancient female relations, who, in watching by his side, were never weary of chaunting, to the sad music of the Border,

the scattered relics of that Minstrelsy of Love and War, which he himself has since gathered and preserved with so pious veneration. The situation of the Tower must be charming. I remember of no poet whose infancy was passed in so poetical a scene. But he has touched all this most gracefully himself:

"He passed the court-gate, and he oped the tower-grate,
And he mounted the narrow stair,
To the bartisan seat, where with maids that on her wait,
He found his Lady fair.

"That Lady sat in mournful mood,
Looked over hill and vale,
O'er Tweed's fair flood, and Merioun's wood,
And all down Teviotdale."

Turning again to the left, Mr. S—— pointed out to me an opening in the hills, where the Leader comes down to mingle with the Tweed—by whose side the remains of the Rhymer's old castle are yet, I believe, to be seen; although, in conformity with one of the Rhymer's own prophecies, the hall is deserted, and the land has passed to other blood.* The whole scene has been embraced by Mr. S—— himself, in the opening of one of his finest ballads:—

"When seven years more were come and gone,
Was war through Scotland spread;
And Ruberslaw shewed high Dunyon
His beacon blazing red.

"Then all by bonny Colding Know,
Pitched pallions took their room;
And crested helms and spears a-rowe,
Glanced gaily through the broom.

"The Leader, rolling to the Tweed,
Resounds the ensenzie;

* "The hare sall kittle on my hearth-stane,
And there never sall be Laird Learmont again."

They roused the deer from Caddenhead,
To distant Torwoodlee.

"The feast was spread in Ercildoune,
In Learmont's high and ancient hall;
And there were knights of high renown,
And ladies laced in pall," &c. &c.

But if I were to quote all the poetry connected with the scenes among which I now stood—in truth, my letter might easily become a volume.

After we had fairly descended the hill, we found that much more time had passed than we had thought of—and with me, indeed, I know not that time ever passed more delightfully—so we made haste and returned at a high trot—the chiding echoes of the dinner-bell coming to us long ere we reached A——d,—

"Swinging slow with sullen roar."

The evening passed as charmingly as the preceding. The younger part of the company danced reels to the music of the bag-pipe, and I believe I would have been tempted to join them, but for some little twitches I had in my left foot. Indeed, I still fear the good cheer of the North is about to be paid for in the usual way; but Heaven send the reckoning may not be a long one. At all events, I am glad the fit did not overtake me in the country, for I should have been sorry to give my company to any body but Mr. Oman during the visitation.

P. M.

LETTER LIII.

TO THE SAME.

ANOTHER morning was devoted to visiting, under the same best of all Cicerones, the two famous ruins of Melrose and Dryburgh, which I had seen from a distance, when on the top of the Eildon. The Abbey of Melrose has been so often the subject of the pencil of exquisite artists—and of late, above all, so much justice has been done to its beauties by Mr. Blore, that I need not trouble you with any description of its general effect. The glorious Oriel Window, on which the moon is made to stream in the Lay of the Last Minstrel, is almost as familiar to you as if yourself had seen it—and so, indeed, must be the whole of the most striking outlines of this venerable pile. But there is one thing about it of which you can have no idea—at least, I had none till I came to the spot—I mean the unrivalled richness and minuteness of all the decorations. Every where, without and within, the doors and windows are surrounded with specimens of sculpture, at once so delicately conceived, and so beautifully executed, that it would be quite ridiculous to compare them with any thing I ever saw, even in the most magnificent remains of Gothic architecture in England or Normandy. There is one cloister, in particular, along the whole length of which there runs a cornice of flowers and plants, entirely unrivalled, to my mind, by any thing elsewhere extant—I do not say in Gothic architecture merely, but in any architecture whatever. Roses, and lilies, and thistles, and ferns, and heaths, in all their varieties, and oak-leaves, and ash-leaves, and a thousand beautiful shapes besides, are chiselled with such inimitable truth, and such grace of nature, that the finest botanist in the world could not desire a better hortus siccus, so far as they go. The wildest productions of the forest, and the most delicate ones of the garden, are represented with equal fidelity and equal taste—and they are all arranged and com-

bined in such a way, that it is evident they were placed there under the eye of some most skilful admirer of all the beauties of external Nature. Nay, there is a human hand in another part, holding a garland loosely in the fingers, which, were it cut off, and placed among the Elgin Marbles, would, I am quite sure, be kissed by the cognoscenti as one of the finest of them all. Nothing can be more simply—more genuinely easy—more full of expression. It would shame the whole gallery of the Boisserees. And yet all this was the work of an age, which the long-headed Presbyterians round about are pleased to talk of in a tone of contempt, scarcely compatible even with pity. Alas! how easy it is to be satisfied with ourselves, when there is no capacity to understand the works of others.

The ruin has been sadly disfigured in former times, by the patch-work repairs of some disciples of the Covenant, who fitted up part of the nave for a place of worship, long after the arches that supported the original roof had given way in that quarter. Such was the perfection of their barbarity, that they sprung new arches in the midst of this exquisite church, entirely devoid, not only of correspondence with that which they were meant to repair, but of conformity with any of the most simple rules of the art—rude clumsy circles, deforming with their sacrilegious intrusion, one of the most airy canopies of stone that was ever hung on high by the hand of human skill—memorable trophies of the triumph of self-complacent ignorance. Surely it was beneath the shadow of some such outrage as this, that the bones of John Knox would have found their most grateful repose! But the Presbyterians have now removed from the precincts of the old sanctuary; and the miserable little kirk they have erected at the distance of a few fields, does not disturb the impression of its awful beauty. The Abbey itself stands on the ground of the Duke of Buccleuch, who has enclosed it carefully, so that what yet remains is likely to remain long as beautiful as it is.

It must have been, in its perfect days, a building of prodigious extent—for even the church (of which only a part is

standing) stretches over a larger space than that of Tintern—and there is no question, the accommodations of the lordly Abbot and his brethren must have been in a suitable style of magnificence. All about the walls and outskirts of the place, may yet be seen scattered knots of garden-flowers, springing up among the tall grass—and the old apple-trees that cluster the village around, are equally the relics of monastic cultivation. The long flat burial-ground to the east and south, receives the shadows of the shattered pillars and arches, as quietly as it did when all their beauty was entire—it is the only accompaniment of the scene, which remains in use and appearance such as it ever was. Within, too, the ancient families of the Forest still preserve the same resting-places, to which the piety of their fore-fathers established their right. Kers, Scotts, Pringles, Elliots,—they all sleep here each in their own antique aisle—the same venerable escutcheon carved or molten above the dust of every succeeding generation.

After I had seen as much of this grand Abbey as one visit would admit of, we mounted our horses again, and rode to Dryburgh, (a distance of four or five miles only,) all the way keeping close to the windings of the Tweed. This edifice stands on a peninsula, the river making a circuit almost quite round its precincts, and behind its towers the whole slope of the hills is covered with oaks, pines, and elms, that shed a solemn gloom upon the ruin—quite different from the soft, undisturbed, unshaded loveliness of Melrose. We passed the river by means of a bridge of chain-work, very elegant in itself, I dare say, but not quite in taste so near such a scene as Dryburgh.—The bridge is one of the many devices of the Earl of B——, who is proprietor of the ground, and indeed has his seat close to the Abbey-walls. A huge colossal statue of Sir William Wallace, executed in staring red free-stone, is another of his devices. This monument of the Earl's patriotism is perched very magnificently on the brink of a rock above the river—and must undoubtedly appear a very grand and appropriate thing in the eyes of Cockney visitants; but my admiration, small as it originally was, suffered much

further diminution, when I was informed that the base of the statute is made to serve as a pot-house, where a rhyming cobler, one of the noble Lord's many protegées, vends odes, elegies, and whisky, for his own behoof, and the few remaining copies of that charming collection, "the Anonymous and Fugitive Pieces of the Right Honourable the Earl of Buchan," for behoof of his patron.

The ruins are in themselves very superb—although not to be compared in any respect with those I had just been seeing; and the Earl is virtuoso enough to keep them in the main in excellent order. But I confess the way in which he has ornamented certain parts of them, was enough to weaken not a little the serious impression which the general view of the whole produced upon my mind. In the midst of one of the desolate courts of the Abbey, he has constructed a spruce little flower-garden, with trim gravel-walks and box-wood edgings;—a few jargonelle pear-trees display their well-clipped branches, nailed in regular lines upon the mouldering walls around, and in the midst of them a tall sign-post lifts its head, and (whether it lies or not I cannot say) proclaims to all whom it may concern, the presence of a less inviting crop—"*Man-traps and spring-guns set in these premises.*" A large bust is placed at one extremity of this cultivated spot, which, at first, I took it for granted, must be Faunus, or Pomona, or Priapus, at the least; but, on drawing near, I recognized at once the fine features of the noble proprietor himself, hewn by some village Phidias, with a measure of resemblance alike honourable to the charms of the subject, and the skill of the artist. A long inscription around the pedestal of the bust, informs us in plain Latin, (but I have forgot the precise words,) that "*The great Author of our being sends now and then bright spirits among mankind, to vindicate his own power, and the dignity of our nature from the scoffs of the impious.*" I wish I had taken a memorandum of the *ipsissima verba*. After wandering through all the labyrinth of towers and courts, the attendant conducted us into an immense vault, which has been set apart in the true Dilettanti taste, for the

reception of Plaster-of-Paris casts of some others of these *bright spirits*. The sober religious light of the place did not at first enable me to recognize what busts they were, but a sudden gleam of sunshine, which occurred very fortunately, soon discovered to me another edition of the same features which I had just been admiring *sub dio*. Lord B—— occupies the central niche in this

> ——"temple, where the great
> Are honoured by the nations."

On his right hand he has Homer, and on his left Mr. Watt of Birmingham, the inventor of the steam engine. Mæonides again is supported by General Washington, and Mr. Watt by Sir Philip Sidney. Shakspeare—Count Rumford—Dr. Matthew Baillie—Charles James Fox—Socrates—Cicero—and Provost Creech of Edinburg—follow on the left; while on the right, the *series Heroum* is continued with equal propriety, by the Author of the Seasons—Lord Nelson—Julius Cæsar—Benjamin Franklin—Mozart—John Knox—Michael Angelo—Aristotle—and a rueful caricature of the Ettrick Shepherd—bearing abundant marks of the agony with which that excellent but unsophisticated person must, no doubt, have submitted to the clammy application of the Savoyard cast-maker. There are some dozens more of worthies dead and living, who partake in the same honours; and altogether the effect of the chalky congregation is as impressive a thing as need be.

In riding back, I received from Mr. S—— a good deal of interesting antiquarian information concerning these great religious establishments, of which there is such an uncommon quantity in this district of Scotland—for these two I have spoken of are only the last links of a complete chain of similar buildings, which stretches all along the banks of the Tweed from the border of England. That these rich ecclesiastical foundations were, in their origin, the pure products of piety, I have little doubt; but I as little question, that, in after times, they were found to be eminently useful in a more

worldly point of view, and therefore protected and enriched by the munificence of many successive monarchs, in whose character piety formed but a slender ingredient. The sanctity of the soil, set apart for the support of the Ministers of Religion, was reverenced by the rudest foes that came to seek spoil in Scotland, and it is easy to see what wisdom there was in investing as large a portion as possible of the frontier soil with this protecting character. The internal state of the country, moreover, during those lawless times of baronial feuds, may have rendered the kings of Scotland fond of conferring as many of their richest fiefs as they could with safety on the less turbulent churchmen—a body, on whose general attachment to the cause of loyalty and order, they might always think themselves entitled to depend. As it was, I have no doubt the cultivation of the country throve much more uniformly under the superintendence of the monks and abbots of Kelso, Jedburgh, Dryburgh, and Melrose, than it would have done in any other hands which the times could furnish—and you know these holy men were commonly bound by their tenures to supply the king's banner, either in offensive or defensive warfare, with the full proportion of soldiers which the value of their lands might seem to render fitting.* The rich abbeys of Northumberland, probably, owed their wealth to similar views of policy—and, perhaps, those on the Wye, and elsewhere along the march of our own principality, may be accounted for in the same way.

P. M.

* Durham was an exception to this rule. Mr. Surtees mentions, that on one occasion, when the tenants of the bishoprick were called upon to contribute their assistance to a royal host advancing upon Scotland, they refused, saying, "We are *haly werk folk*, and must stay here where we hold our lands by the tenure of guarding the body of our Bishop St. Cuthbert." This plea was admitted.

LETTER LIV.

TO THE SAME.

* * * * *

* * * * *

After various attempts, I have at last succeeded in making what I am inclined to think a very fair sketch of the head of Mr. W—— S——. I send you a copy of it in pen and ink, on the other side of my sheet, and would hope you may consider it worthy of a double postage. I have made various drawings of him, both in more solemn and more ludicrous moods; but I think the expression comes of this nearest the habitual character of his face. Study it well for a few minutes, and then listen to a few of my remarks on the organization of this remarkable man.

In the general form, so very high and conical, and, above all, in the manner in which the forehead goes into the top of the head, there is something which at once tells you that here is the lofty enthusiasm, and passionate veneration for greatness, which must enter into the composition of every illustrious poet. In these respects, S—— bears some resemblance to the busts of Shakspeare—but a much more close resemblance to those of the great Corneille; and, surely, Corneille was one of the most favoured of all poets, in regard to all that constitutes the true poetic soaring of conception. No minor poet ever approaches to this conformation; it is reserved for "Earth's giant sons" alone. It is lower down, however, that the most peculiar parts of the organization are to be found—or rather those parts, the position of which, close beneath these symbols of high poetical impetus, gives to the whole head its peculiar and characteristic expression. The development of the organ of imitation is prodigious, and the contiguous organ of pleasantry is scarcely less remarkable. This again leads off the swell into that of imagination, on

which the upper region rests, as on a firm and capacious basis. I do not think that the head is so long from stem to stern as Lord Byron's, which probably indicates some inferiority in point of profound feeling. Like Lord Byron's, however, the head is, in general, well brought out in every quarter, and there is a freedom in the air with which it sits upon his shoulders, which shows that nature is strong in all the different regions—or, in other words, that a natural balance subsists among the various parts of his organization. I have noticed, on the other hand, that people whose strength lies chiefly in one direction, have, for the most part, a stiff and constrained way of holding their heads. Wordsworth, for instance, has the back part of his head—the seat of the personal feelings—small and little expanded, and the consequence is, that there is nothing to weigh against the prodigious mass of mere musing in front—so that his head falls forward in any thing but a graceful way; while, on the other hand, the deficiency of grave enthusiasm allows the self-love in the hinder parts of Mr. Jeffrey's head, to push forward his chin in a style that produces a puny sort of effect. Tom Moore has no want of enthusiasm, but it is not quite placed as it should be—or, at least, with him also the sinciput predominates in an irresistible degree. Now Scott and Byron are distinguished from all these by a fine secure swing of the head, as if they were prepared at all points. Lord Byron's head, however, is, I think, still more complete all throughout, than that of Mr. Scott. The forehead is defective in much that Scott's possesses, but it is very fine upwards, and the top of the head is wonderfully capacious. The back part, in both of their heads, is manly and gallant-looking. Had they not been lame, (by the way, what a singular coincidence that is!) I have no doubt that they would both have been soldiers—and the world would have wanted Marmion and the Corsair. Lord Byron's head is, without doubt, the finest in our time—I think it is better, on the whole, than either Napoleon's, or Goethe's, or Canova's, or Wordsworth's. The chin, lips, and neck, are beautiful—in the most noble style of antique

beauty—and the nose is not unworthy of keeping them company—and yet that of Wordsworth is more perpendicular, and belongs still more strictly to the same class which the ancients, having exaggerated it into the ideal—attributed to Jupiter. It is better shaped in the ridge, than any nose of modern times I have seen; it comes down so straight from the forehead, that the eyes are thrown quite back into the head, as in the loftiest antique. Coleridge has a grand head, but very ill balanced, and the features of the face are coarse—although, to be sure, nothing can surpass the depth of meaning in his eyes, and the unutterable dreamy luxury in his lips. Thomas Campbell again, has a poor skull upwards, compared with what one might have looked for in him; but the lower part of the forehead is exquisite, and the features are extremely good, though tiny. They seem to me to be indicative of a most morbid degree of sensibility—the lips, in particular, are uncommonly delicate, and the eyes are wonderfully expressive of poetical habits of feeling. His brow speaks him to be born with a turn of composition truly lirical, and, perhaps, he should not have cared to aim at other things. An uncommon perception of sweetness and refinement sits upon the whole of his physiognomy, but his face, like his mind, seems also to glow ever and anon with the greater fires of patriotism and public glory. He should have been a patriotic lyrical poet, and his lays would not have failed to be sung,

> "Mid the festal city's blaze,
> When the wine-cup shines in light."

Indeed, why do I say he *should* have been? he *has* been, and *Hohenlinden*, and *Ye Mariners of England*, and *The Battle of the Baltic*, will never be forgotten as long as the British Jack is hoisted by the hands of freemen. I have already said something about the head of the author of the Isle of Palms—and that of the Ettrick Shepherd. They are both fine in their several ways. That of Wilson is full of the marks of genuine enthusiasm, and lower down, of intense perception, and love of localities—which last feature, by the

way, may, perhaps, account for his wild delight in rambling. I have heard that in his early youth, he proposed to go out to Africa, in quest of the Joliba, and was dissuaded only by the representations made to him on the subject of his remarkably fair and florid complexion—but I believe he has since walked over every hill and valley in the three kingdoms—having angling and versifying, no doubt, for his usual occupations, but finding room every now and then, by way of interlude, for astonishing the fairs and wakes all over these islands, by his miraculous feats in leaping, wrestling, and single-stick. As for the Ettrick Shepherd, I am told that when Spurzheim was here, he never had his paws off him—and some cranioscopical young ladies of Edinburgh are said still to practise in the same way upon the good-humoured owner of so many fine bumps. I hear Mathews has borrowed for his "*At Home*," a saying which originally belongs to the Ettrick Shepherd. When Dr. Spurzheim, (or as the Northern Reviewers very improperly christened him in the routs of Edinburgh, *Doustierswivel*,)—when the Doctor first began to feel out the marks of genius in the cranium of the pastoral poet, it was with some little difficulty that Mr. Hogg could be made to understand the drift of his curiosity. After hearing the Doctor's own story—"My dear fellow," quoth the Shepherd, "if a few knots and swells make a skull of genius, I've seen mony a saft chield get a swapping organization in five minutes at Selkirk tryst."

Since I have found my way once more into the subject of Craniology, I may as well tell you that I totally disagree with you, in regard to your remarks upon my notion of the Farnese Hercules. I do not think your eye has been sufficiently trained in the inspection of living skulls; you must not venture as yet upon the antique, in which there is always some allowance to be made for the proper and necessary exaggeration of artists, that knew well enough what was right, but knew also that things should be broadly told, which are meant for the distant eye. The Theseus is another statue of a hero of somewhat the same kind, and on looking into

these things more leisurely, I am inclined to think you will find in it also confirmation of all that I said. In this town, there is at the Drawing Academy, a cast of this Elgin Marble, which I saw only yesterday, and I am never weary of seeing any copy, however faint, of that glorious original. The most remarkable thing about the organization of the Theseus, however, is that the front part of the head is higher than the back part, which is a circumstance that very *seldom* occurs in Nature. I am not sure whether the form, even of this part of the Theseus, has not been defaced by the weather, and I think that in the cast there is some look of a joining, as if the upper hemisphere of the head had been found separate, and afterwards united to the statue. This is a profound and delicate question, and, as I pass through London, I shall certainly endeavour to have a committee of craniologists summoned together to inquire into the fact—as one upon which the most important conclusions may depend. My own poor opinion is, that the sculptor probably did make the front part of the head higher than, or, at least, equally high with, the back parts. In most human heads, the point of will is the highest part—and from thence there is a slope more or less coming down to the forehead. In the Apollo Belvedere the slope is not much, and the line which it describes is convex and swelling. Now, in the Hercules Farnese, making allowance for the irregularities of the hair, there is no slope, but a level. If you look down on the top of the head of the Hercules, you will find it a very long one. The forehead is far pushed out—the middle is large —and the animal faculties are copious. The head of the Apollo, on the contrary, is far from being long in the same proportion—and it is singular how little the forehead is expanded, when considered in relation to the rest of the head. But I think the ancients had a notion that a small forehead expresses youth.

But the animal faculties, even of the Hercules himself, are quite Lilliputian compared with those of a late hotel-keeper in this town, of whom a bust was taken after his

death, by particular request of my friend W——. This man's head (his name was Macculloch,) is shaped exactly like a jelly-bag, the animal propensities, below and behind, having apparently drawn down to them the whole of the juices, from which his organization above ought to have been supplied. His ears can scarcely be seen for the masses of luxurious prominence among which they are buried, and no mad bull was ever thicker just above the nape of the neck. I think it is much to be regretted, that such a person should have died in the prime of life—he must have been a fine living symbol of the Epicureanism—not of the garden —but of the kitchen and the cellar. His forehead is low and retreating, his nose short, and snubbed up at the end—the nostrils purfled and swelled out as they were not the receptacles of air, but apertures made expressly for blowing out the fumes of wine—perhaps tobacco—and his throat looks as if it were never intended to be otherwise than gorged with good cheer. Altogether he bears considerable resemblance to some of the fine old toping satyrs I have seen on antique vases. I am told this man was of great use to Edinburgh, by introducing many most striking improvements in all departments of the profession wherein Nature had fitted him so eminently to excel. There was no such thing as a dinner well set down in a Northern tavern, till this great genius's jelly-bag head was set to work, and now I confess the North appears to me to be in all these respects treading fast on the kibes of the South. I think there is no question, the tavern-keepers of Scotland ought to canonize Macculloch as their patron saint, and put up his effigy over their doors, as time out of mind the tobacconists have placed over theirs that of the celebrated Negro, who smoked in one day the weight of his own body in segars.

* * * * *

* * * * *

P. M.

LETTER LV.

TO THE SAME.

* * * *

* * * *

I KNOW not how many days I might have lingered in the delightful society of A——d, had it not been that I had promised W—— to be back in Edinburgh by a particular day at dinner, and I was the less willing to break my engagement, as I understood Mr. S—— was to come to town in the course of a week, so that I should not be compelled to take my final leave of him at his own seat. I quitted, however, with not a little reluctance, the immediate scene of so much pleasure—and the land of so many noble recollections. The morning, too, on which I departed, was cold and misty; the vapours seemed unwilling to melt about the hill-tops; and I forded the darkened waters of the Tweed in assuredly a very pensive mood. Muffled in my cloak above the ears, I witnessed rather than directed the motions of the shandrydan, and arrived in Auld Reekie, after a ride of more than thirty miles, almost without having escaped, for a single second, from the same cloud of reverie in which I had begun the journey.

The character of the eminent man whom I had been seeing, and the influence which his writings have produced upon his country, were, as might be supposed, the main ingredients of all my meditation. After having conversed with Mr. S——, and so become familiar with the features of his countenance, and the tones of his voice, it seemed to me as if I had been furnished with a new key to the whole purpose of his intellectual labours, and was, for the first time, in a situation to look at the life and genius of the man with an eye of knowledge. It is wonderful how the mere seeing of such

a person gives concentration, and compactness, and distinctness to one's ideas on all subjects connected with him: I speak for myself—to my mind, one of the best commentaries upon the meaning of any author, is a good image of his face—and, of course, the reality is far more precious than any image can be.

You have often told me that W—— S—— has been excelled by several other poets of his time, in regularity and beauty of composition; and so far I have agreed, and do still agree with you. But I think there can be no doubt, that far more than any other poet, or any other author of his time, he is entitled to claim credit for the extent and importance of the class of ideas to which he has drawn the public attention; and if it be so, what small matters all his deficiencies or irregularities are, when put in the balance against such praise as this. At a time when the literature of Scotland—and of England too—was becoming every day more and more destitute of command over every thing but the mere speculative understanding of men—this great genius seems to have been raised up to counteract, in the wisest and best of all ways, this unfortunate tendency of his age, by re-awakening the sympathies of his countrymen for the more energetic characters and passions of their forefathers. In so doing he employed, indeed, with the skill and power of a true master, and a true philosopher, what constitutes the only effectual means of neutralizing that barren spirit of lethargy into which the progress of civilization is in all countries so apt to lull the feelings and imaginations of mankind. The period during which most of his works were produced, was one of mighty struggles and commotions throughout all Europe, and the experience of that eventful period is sufficient to prove, that the greatest political anxieties, and the most important international struggles, can exert little awakening influence upon the character and genius of a people, if the private life of its citizens at home remains limited and monotonous, and confines their personal experience and the range of their thoughts. The rational matter-of-fact way in which all great

public concerns are now-a-days carried forward, is sufficient to throw a damp upon the most stirring imagination. Wars are begun and concluded more in reliance upon the strength of money, than on the strength of minds and of men—votes, and supplies, and estimates, and regular business-like despatches, and daily papers, take away among them the greater part of that magnificent indistinctness, through which, in former times, the great games of warfare and statesmanship used alike to be regarded by those whose interests were at stake. Very little room is left for enthusiasm, when people are perpetually perplexed in their contemplations of great actions and great men, by the congratulating pettinesses of the well-disposed on one side, and the carping meannesses of the envious, and the malevolent, and the little-minded, on the other. The circle within which men's thoughts move, becomes every day a narrower one—and they learn to travel to all their conclusions, not over the free and generous ranges of principle and feeling, but along the plain, hard, dusty highway of calculation. Now, a poet like Walter Scott, by enquiring into and representing the modes of life in earlier times, employs the imagination of his countrymen, as a means of making them go through the personal experience of their ancestry, and of making them acquainted with the various courses of thought and emotion, by which their forefathers had their genius and characters drawn out—things to which, by the mechanical arrangements of modern life and society, we have been rendered too much strangers. Other poets, such as Byron, have attempted an analogous operation, by carrying us into foreign countries, where society is still comparatively young—but their method is by no means so happy or so complete as Scott's, because the people among whom they seek to interest us, have national characters totally different from our own—whereas those whose minds he exhibits as a stimulus to ours, are felt at once to be great kindred originals, of which our every-day experience shows us copies, faint indeed, but capable of being worked into stronger resemblance. If other poets should afterwards seek

and collect their materials from the same field, they may perhaps be able to produce more finished compositions, but the honour of being the Patriarch of the National Poetry of Scotland, must alwas remain in the possession of Walter Scott. Nay, whatever direction the genius of his countrymen may take in future years, the benefit of his writings must ever be experienced in the great resuscitation of slumbering elements, which they have produced in the national mind. Perhaps the two earliest of his poems, the Lay of the Last Minstrel and Marmion, are the most valuable, because they are the most impregnated with the peculiar spirit of Scottish antiquity. In his subsequent poems, he made too much use of the common materials and machinery employed in the popular novels of *that* day, and descended so far as to hinge too much of their interest upon the common resources of an artfully constructed fable. In like manner, in those prose Tales—which I no more doubt to be his than the poems he has published with his name—in that delightful series of works, which have proved their author to be the nearest kinsman the creative intellect of Shakspeare has ever had—the best are those, the interest of which is most directly and historically national—Waverley and Old Mortality. The whole will go down together, so long as any national character survives in Scotland—and themselves will, I nothing question, prolong the existence of national character there more effectually, than any other stimulus its waning strength is ever likely to meet with. But I think the two I have mentioned, will always be considered as the brightest jewels in this ample crown of unquenched and unquenchable radiance. What Shakspeare has done for the civil wars of the two Roses, and the manifestations of national mind produced by the influence of the old baronial feuds —what the more than dramatic Clarendon has done for the great period of contest between the two majestic sets of principles, upon whose union, matured and tempered, the modern constitution of England is founded—the same service has been rendered by the author of these Tales, (whosoever

he may be,) to the most interesting times in the history of the national mind of Scotland—the times, when all the various elements of her character, religious and political, were exhibited in their most lively fermentation of sharpness and vigour. As for the complaints which have been made of unfairness and partiality, in the views which he has given of the various parties—I think they are not only exaggerated, but altogether absurd. It is, indeed, very easy to see to *which* side the Poet's own early prejudicies have given his mind a leaning—but I think it is no less easy to see that the romance of his predilections has been tempered and chastened by as fine a mixture of sober reflection and generous candour, as ever entered into the composition of any man of high and enthusiastic feeling. There is too much chivalry about the man, to allow of his treating his *foes* unfairly; and had he been really disposed to injure any set of men, he had weapons enough at his disposal, very different from any which even his detractors can accuse him of having employed. But enough of such fooleries; they are only fit for those who have uttered them—a set of persons, by the way, who might have been expected to bear a little innocent ridicule with a little more Christian equanimity, after so ample experience of the "*Cachinno monstrarier.*"

Altogether, it must be allowed that the situation of Scotland, as to literature, is a very peculiar one. No large crop of indigenous literature sprung out of its own feelings at the time when the kindred spirit of England was in that way so prolific. The poets it produced in the former times were almost all emigrants, and took up the common stock of ideas that were floating in England;—or at least their works, like those of Thomson, had no relation to their own country in particular, or its modes of feeling. It is a difficult question how two countries, standing in the relation of England and Scotland, should manage with their respective talents and histories. It cannot be doubted that there is a very considerble difference in their national genius—and indeed, the Scots seem to resemble the English much more in their power of thought

than in their turn of character. Their first remarkable exhibition of talent was entirely in the line of thought—Hume, Smith, and the rest of that school, are examples. The Scots dialect never having been a written language, at least to any important extent, and there being no literary monuments belonging exclusively to Scotland, of course the associations of the literary men were formed on English models and on English works. Now, after two nations have been long separate in their interests, and have respectively nourished their own turn of thinking—they may at last come to be united in their interests, but their associations cannot be so pliable, nor can they be so easily amalgamated. An union of national interests *quoad* external power relates chiefly to the future—whereas, associations respect the past. And here was an unfortunate circumstance of separation between the Scots literati and the mass of the Scottish people.—The essence of all nationality, however, is a peculiar way of thinking, and conceiving, which may be applied to subjects not belonging to the history of one's own country, although it certainly is always most in place when exhibited in conjunction with the scenery and accompaniments of Home. In Scotland, there are many things that must conspire to wean men from the past—the disuse of their old dialect—the unpleasant nature of some of the events that have befallen them—the neighbourhood of triumphant and eclipsing England, which, like an immense magnet, absolutely draws the needles from the smaller ones—the Reformation, above all, which among them, was conducted in a way peculiarly unfortunate, causing all the old religious associations to be considered as detestable and sinful; and gradually sinking into oblivion a great many ancient ideas of another class, which were entwined with these, and which were shaken off also as a matter of necessity, *ne pars sincera trahatur.*

Puritanism, by its excessive exclusiveness, always brings along with it a nakedness and barrenness of mind in relation to all human attachments, and the temporal concerns of life. But human nature, in despite of puritanism, can never be

utterly extinguished. It still demands some human things for our affections to lean upon—some thoughts to be dear to our imaginations, and which we may join our countrymen in loving—for common attachments widely diffused, must always tend to civilize and improve human nature, and awaken generous and social habits of feeling. Shakspeare observes in Coriolanus, that, during the time of war, citizens always feel more benevolent toward each other; and the reason, no doubt, is, that war reminds them in what respects their interests and feelings concur. Puritanism weighs too hard upon human nature, and does not tend to draw out its best aspect. It makes every man too much the arbiter of his opinions and their champion—hence too much self-love. It makes him look with too much jealousy and anxiety upon his neighbours, as persons in error, or capable of leading him into error—or as differing in their convictions from those at which he himself has had the happiness to arrive. Hence a want of cheerfulness, confidence, and settled good nature.—Lastly, puritanism leaves a man alone to face and fight the devil upon the strength of his own virtue and judgment, which, I dare say, Colonel Harrison himself would feel to be as much as he was able for. Puritans confine their imaginations entirely to the Scriptures, and cut themselves off from the early Romish legends of saints—the true mythology of Christianity—the only part of it, at least, which poetry and the other fine arts can, without too great a breach of reverence, mould and adapt to their own purposes. Some of them surely are exquisite in beauty, and afford room for all manner of play of fancy. I speak, you will remember, entirely with an eye to literature. Whatever may be the orthodox opinions on these subjects, why should poetry refuse to invest them with preternatural attributes, or to take advantage of the fine poetical situations which sometimes occur in those old histories?

Again, although the history of Scotland has not been throughout filled with splendid or remarkable events, fitted to show off the national character in the most luminous and im-

posing points of view, yet few persons will refuse to consider the Scots as a nation remarkable—most remarkable—for natural endowments. It would be difficult to say in what elements adapted to make a nation shine in literature they are at all deficient. Now, when the character of a nation has once fully developed itself in events or in literature, its posterity are too apt to consider its former achievements or writings as an adequate expression or symbol of what exists in themselves, and so to remain contented without making any farther exertions—and this, I take it, is one of the main causes of what appears externally in the history of nations, to be barrenness, degeneracy, and exhaustion of intellectual power—so that it may perhaps be one of the advantages which Scotland possesses over England and many other countries, that she has not yet created any sufficient monuments of that "mightiness for good or ill" that is within her.

If a remainder of her true harvest is yet to be reaped—if any considerable body of her yet unexpended force is now to make its appearance in literature, it will do so under the most favourable circumstances, and with all appliances to boot, which the present state of intellectual cultivation in Europe can furnish, both in the way of experience, and as objects for examination and reflection. The folly of slighting and concealing what remains concealed within herself, is one of the worst and most pernicious that can beset a country, in the situation wherein Scotland stands. Although, perhaps, it is not now the cue of Scotland to dwell very much on her own past history, (which that of England has thrown too much into the shade,) yet she should observe what fine things have been made even of this department, by the great genius of whom I have spoken above—and learn to consider her own national *character* as a mine of intellectual wealth, which remains in a great measure unexplored. While she looks back upon the history of England, as upon that of the country to which she has suspended and rendered subordinate her fortunes, yet she should by no means regard English *literature*, as an expression of her mind, or as superseding the exami-

nation of what intellectual resources remain unemployed within her own domains of peculiar possession.

The most remarkably literary characters which Scotland produced last century, showed merely (as I have already said) the force of her intellect, as applied to matters of reasoning. The generation of Hume, Smith, &c., left matters of feeling very much unexplored, and probably considered Poetry merely as an elegant and tasteful appendage to the other branches of literature, with which they themselves were more conversant. Their disquisitions on morals were meant to be the vehicles of ingenious theories—not of convictions of sentiment. They employed, therefore, even in them, only the national intellect, and not the national modes of feeling.

The Scottish literati of the present day have inherited the ideas of these men, and acted upon them in a great measure —with scarcely more than the one splendid exception of Walter Scott. While all the rest were contenting themselves with exercising and displaying their speculative acuteness, this man had the wisdom—whether by the impulse of nature, or from reflection, I know not—to grapple boldly with the feelings of his countrymen. The habits of self-love, so much pampered and indulged by the other style, must have opposed some resistance to the influence of works such as his—I mean their more solid, and serious, and abiding influence upon the characters and mind of those who read them; but these are only wreaths of snow, whose cold flakes are made to be melted when the sun shines fairly upon them. His works are altogether the most remarkable phenomenon in the age of wonders—produced among a people, whose taste had been well nigh weaned from all these ranges of feeling, on which their main inspiration and main power depend—they have, of themselves, been sufficient to create a more than passionate return of faith and homage to those deserted elements of greatness, in all the better part of his countrymen. I consider him, and his countrymen should do so, as having been the sole saviour of all the richer and warmer spirit of literature in Scotland.

He is, indeed, the *Facillime Princeps* of all her poets, past and present, and I more than question the likelihood of his having hereafter any "Brother near the throne."

I should like to see a really fine portrait of Mr. S——, representing him in his library—or rather, in his armoury at A——d, musing, within sight of the silver Tweed, upon some grand evacuation of the national genius of his country. By the way, I should have told you what a fine picturesque place this armoury is—how its roof is loaded with fac-similes of the best decorations of Melrose—how its windows glow with the rich achievements of all the old families of Border renown—how its walls are covered with hauberks, jacks, actons, bills, brands, claymores, targets, and every weapon of foray warfare.—But I must not come back to my descriptions.

P. M.

P. S. If any of my remarks appear short and ill-tempered, be pleased to remember that they have been written under all the irritation of a foot swelling and reddening every hour into more decided *Podagra*. I feel that I am fairly in for a fit. I have at least a week of my sofa before me—so, instead of claret, and the writing of worldly epistles, I must e'en do the best I can with a sip of water-gruel, and the old luxury of conning over Burton's Anatomy of Melancholy. Once more adieu!—"A stout heart to a stiff brae," as we say in Scotland; which, being interpreted, signifies

"Tu ne cede malis, sed contra audentior ito."

P. M.

LETTER LVI.

TO THE REV. DAVID WILLIAMS.

My dear David,

I have not written to you for these eight days, simply because I have not been able to do so. The fit has been a severe one, and I feel that I am weakened, and see that I am thinned by it, beyond almost any preceding example in my own experience. My friend W——, however, was quite indefatigable in his attentions; and every now and then, some of the new friends I have made in Edinburgh would be dropping in upon me to relieve the tedium or the agony, (as might happen,) by the charms of their good-humoured and sympathetic conversation. Mr. J——, in his way home from the Parliament-House—Mr. P——, immediately after delivering his lecture—and sometimes Professor L—— and the Ettrick Shepherd, in the course of their walks, were among my morning visiters; and I had a regular succession of poets, artists, and young lawyers, sipping coffee in my view every evening. An old maiden lady, nearly related to Mr. W——, was also particularly kind to me. She sent her foot-boy every morning, with compliments and inquiries, and some small jar of sweetmeats, or bottle of cordial, of her own manufacture—or the like. Indeed, W—— informs me, that one day she went so far as to throw out some hints respecting a visit to the sick man, *in propria persona*; but my friend easily spared me that addition to my uneasinesses, by one or two dry remarks about "malicious tongues," and the "rules of propriety." But now, my good friend, I am well nigh a sound man again, and intend, God willing, to walk out and sun myself in Prince's-Street a little while to-morrow forenoon.

In the meantime I have had my sofa removed close to the window, which commands a view of a short street communicating between St. Andrew's Square and Prince's-Street—

and which is tolerably frequented, although not quite so much so as I could wish. This, indeed, is the only fault I have to find with my hotel—it does not afford me a sufficient peep of the bustle and tumult of the city. In the country I like to be altogether in the country—but, I think in a town, above all in a town-hotel, the best situation is that which is nearest the heart of the hubbub. The *heart* is rather too strong an expression, but I think there is no use in having eyes to see and ears to hear, unless these avenues of knowledge are to be brought into something like contact with the busy sounds and sights of the place, However, even as it is, by help of a bright pair of spectacles, and a quick pair of ears, I make shift to gather some food for my speculation. One thing has already struck me—and that is, that there is a much greater number of gentlemen in black coats walking about than before I was confined to my couch. They seem to have poured into the city during my illness—and, indeed, I see by the newspapers, that the General Assembly, or great Annual Convocation of the Kirk, is at hand. On these I shall of course keep an especial look-out.

Those I have already remarked, seem, in passing along, to be chiefly occupied in recognizing and shaking hands with each other—and sometimes with old acquaintances among the citizens of the place. Their greetings seem to be given and returned with a degree of heartiness and satisfaction which inspires a favourable idea of all parties concerned. I observed only this minute, a thin, hardy-looking minister, in a blue spenser over his sables, arrested immediately under my window, by a jolly-looking burgher, who, to judge by his obesity, may probably be in the magistracy, or council at least. "Hoo d'ye do, Mr. Such-a-thing?" said the cit, (for I could not help lifting the glass an inch or two,) "and hoo did ye leave all at Auchtertirloch Manse? You must come and take your broth with us." To which the man in black replies with a clerical blandness of modulation—"Most certainly—you are exceedingly good—and hoo fares it with your good leddy? You have lately

had an addition to your family." "I understand from a friend in the North," cries the other, "that you are not behind me in that particular—twins, Doctor! O, the luck of a manse!" A loud cachination follows from both parties, and after a bow and a scrape—"You will remember four o'clock on Tuesday, Dr. Macalpine."

In the course of an hour or two, I have have an *opportunity* of witnessing several other rencounters of the same *kind*, and I feel a sort of contemplative pleasure in looking upon them, as so many fortuitous idyllia presenting themselves amidst the common thoroughfare of the streets. I saw, among the rest, one huge ecclesiastical figure, of an apoplectic and lethargic aspect, moving slowly along, with his eyes goggling in his head, and his tongue hanging out of his mouth. He was accosted by an old lawyer, whom I had often remarked in the Parliament-House, and who seemed to delight in reviving their juvenile remembrances, by using the broadest Scots dialect. Among other observations I heard, "Hech, man! I never think the yill so gude noo as when we war young"—and after some further interchange of sentiments, "Ye would hear that auld George Piper had pappit aff," &c. &c. &c. But I see Mr. W——'s old yellow chariot at the door—and, besides, my fingers won't serve me for a longer epistle.

Ever your's.

P. M.

P. S. By the way, during my days of convalescence, I have been so vain as to sit for my portrait to Mr. John Watson, the young painter, of whom I have said something in a former letter. I did this at the urgent request of Mr. Blackwood, the bookseller, who has taken a vehement desire to have my effigy among those of some other great men at his country-house. I fear, however, that the state of my health has made the painter give me a face at least ten years too old.

LETTER LVII.

TO THE SAME.

* * * * *

* * * * *

Mr. W—— seeing that I had recovered a considerable measure of my vigour, insisted upon carrying me with him to make my bow at the levee of the Earl of Morton, who has come down as the King's Lord High Commissioner to the General Assembly of this year. Detesting, as he does, the Kirk—its Creed—and its practice—to wait in all due form upon the representative of Majesty, at this its great festival, is a thing which he would think it highly indecorous in him, or in the head and representative of any ancient Scottish family, to omit; and, indeed, he is of opinion, that no gentleman of any figure who happens to be in Scotland at the time, should fail to appear in the same manner. He was, besides, more than commonly anxious in his devoirs on this occasion, on account of his veneration for the blood of the old Earls of Douglas, whose true representative he says the Earl of Morton is. My curiosity came powerfully in back of his zeal, and I promised to be in all readiness next morning at the hour he appointed.

In the meantime, His Grace (for such is the style of the Commissioner) had already arrived at the Royal Hotel, where, *more avito*, the provost and baillies, in all the gallantry of furred cloaks and gold chains, were in readiness to receive him, and present the ancient silver keys, symbolical of the long-vanished gates of the Gude Town of Edinburgh. The style in which the whole of this mock royalty is got up, strikes me as being extremely absurd. In the first place, I hold it a plain matter, that, if the King's majesty is to send a representative to preside over the disputes of the Scottish ministers and elders, this representative should be lodged no

where but in the Palace of Holyrood, where he might hold his mimic state in the same halls and galleries which might have been dignified by the feet of the real monarchs of Scotland. Instead of this, the Commissioner is lodged in a common hotel—a magnificent one indeed—but which *has* assuredly nothing royal about it but its name. And then, its situation is supposed to be too distant from the place where the Assembly meets, to allow of his walking all *the* way thither in procession, as it seems ancient custom requires him to do. So when the hour of meeting approaches, his Grace is smuggled over the bridge in a sedan chair, and stuck up in the Merchant's Hall to receive the company that come to swell the train of his procession. The undignified uses to which the apartment is applied at other times (for it serves as a reading-room all the rest of the year) is enough to throw an addition, and surely a needless addition, of ridicule over the scenes of courtly greeting to which it is now devoted. But it is within an easy walk of St. Giles's Church, *and that* counterbalances all objections.

'Meaning to be in London, and kiss the Prince's hand once more, before I return to Wales, I had brought my old court suit with me—the same suit of modest chocolate-coloured kerseymere, David, which has figured in the presence of King George and Queen Charlotte at St. James's—of Napoleon and Louis le désiré at the Thuilleries—of smooth Pius the Sixth at the Vatican—of solemn Francis at the Schloss of Vienna—of grim whiskered Frederick William at Berlin—of pale monastic Augustus at Dresden—to say nothing of the late enormous Hector of Wirtemberg, the good worthy Grand Duke of Weimar and Eisenach, and some score of minor thrones, principalities, and dominations besides. I took it for granted, that I could not make my appearance in presence of the Ecclesiastical Lord Lieutenant, without mounting this venerable garb; so John had the coat, waiscoat, and breeches well aired, and amused himself half an evening in polishing the steel buttons and buckles—and my queue being dropped into a seemly bag, and my loins girded with my

father's somewhat rusty rapier—I drove—once more cap-a-pee a courtier—to my rendezvous in the Lawn-Market.

I found W—— arrayed in a deputy-lieutenant's uniform of blue and red, with (albeit somewhat against the rules) the little cross of Dannebrog, which he had conferred on him many years ago, when he was in Denmark—on his breast; but in spite of his own splendour, he quizzed me unmercifully on the sober pomp of my own vestments—assuring me, that, except the Commissioner, and his purse-bearer and pages, I should find nobody in a court suit at the levee. It was too late, however, to change; and as I am not a very nervous man about trifles, I did not choose to miss the sight merely because I had over-dressed myself. W——'s old coachman had combed his wig in full puff, and his lackey mounted behind us in a fine gala livery of green and white, as old as Queen Ann's sixpences—so I question not the contents of the yellow chariot, outside and inside, made rather a conspicuous appearance. However, we soon reached the Merchant's Hall, and were ushered into the Presence-chamber of his Grace.

You know Lord Morton, so I don't need to tell you that the heir of the Douglasses made a highly respectable appearance, standing in the midst of his circle, in blue and gold, with the green ribbon and star of the Thistle. I had often seen his lordship; so, after being introduced by W——, and making my lowest bow, as in duty bound, I exercised my optics more on the Court than the Commissioner—the needles than their magnet. You never saw such a motley crew of homage-doers. I myself and my old chocolate suit might be considered, it struck me, as forming a sort of link between the officers in scarlet uniform, and the Members of Assembly in black dishabilles, of which two classes of persons the greater part of the company was composed. But, altogether, there could not be a more miserable mixture of tawdriness and meanness. Here stood a spruce Irish hero, stuck all over with peninsular medals, in jack-boots—there, a heavy-headed minister, with his car-

rotty hair flying *ad libitum* about his ears—his huge hands half buried in the fobs of his velveteen breeches, and a pair of black worsted stockings, hanging line upon line, measure upon measure, about his ankles. On one side, a tall, stately, very fine-looking peer of the realm, clad in solemn black from head to foot, and having a double bamboo in his hand, almost as tall as himself, might be supposed to represent the old Lords of the Covenant, who were glad to add to the natural consequence of their nobility, that of being "Elders in Israel." On the other, a little shabby scrivener, in trowsers, (pro scelus!) might be seen swelling with vanity at the notion of his being permitted to stand so close to so many of his betters—and twirling his hat all the while in an agony of impudent awkwardness. To the left, the Procurator of the Kirk, (the official law-adviser of the Assembly,) in his advocate's wig of three tails, and the Moderator himself, distinguished from his clerical brethren by a single-breasted coat and cocked hat, might be seen laying their heads together, touching some minutiæ of the approaching meeting—while the right was occupied, in all manner of civic solemnity and glory, by a phalanx of the magistracy of Edinburgh. The figure which these last worthies cut is so imposing, that I can easily believe in the truth of a story I have heard of last year's Assembly, which, at first sight, would, no doubt, have somewhat the air of a quiz. The Earl of Errol was the Commissioner, and the University of Glasgow had thought fit to send an address of congratulation to his Lordship, on his having attained to so high an office. Their envoy was their Principal—an ancient divine, as I am told, who has been well used to Assemblies and Commissioners for more than half a century. On this occasion, however, his long experience seems to have been of little use to him, for he committed a sad blunder in the mode of delivering his address. The gorgeous array of Baillies, it is to be supposed, had caught his eye on first entering the Presence-room, and dazzled it so much, that it would have required some time to recover its power of discrimination.

Of this gorgeous array, the centre-star was one Baillie ——, powdered with a particular degree of splendour, and the Principal, never doubting that he was the Commissioner, stepped close to him, and rolled out the well-poised periods of his address, with an air of unquestioning submission, that quite convulsed the whole of those who were up to the joke. The Baillie himself, however, was too much thunderstruck to be able to stop him, and the true dignitary enjoyed the humour of the thing too much to deprive his Double of any part of the compliment. In a word, it was not till the doctor had made an end of speaking, and stood in smiling expectation of his Grace's reply, that some kind friend whispered him he was in the wrong box; and, looking round, he saw, in an opposite corner of the room, a personage, not indeed so fat, and, perhaps, not quite so fine as his Baillie, but possessing a native grace and majesty of port and lineament, which spoke but too plainly where the incense should have been offered. This was a cruel scene; but the awe with which some of the rural pastors about me seemed to survey, now and then, the grand knot of Baillies, was sufficient to convince me that it might have happened very naturally. The present levee, by the way, was, as W—— informed me, by much the most splendid he had seen for a long while—the old Duke of Gordon was among the company, and a greater number than is common of the inferior orders of the nobility. The most conspicuous, however, in every point of view, was the Earl of Hopetoun, the Achates of Wellington, and a true hero in figure as well as in more important matters. Close by his side stood his heroic brother-in-arms, Colonel David Steuart, of Garth, whom I met two years ago at Lord Combermere's.

By and bye, the tolling of the bells of St. Giles' announced that the time was come for the procession to move, and the Commissioner quitted the chamber, preceded and followed by a few awkward-looking pages in red coats, and some other attendants. The nobility then marshalled themselves in order due, and descended—a baronet or two after

them—after these, a few new-made Knights of the Bath. The rest of the party seemed to follow without discrimination, pretty much as they stood nearest the door; but W—— told me as we went, that not many years have elapsed since this quiet of precedence was unknown to the processions of the Commissioner. A grievous feud, it seems, had arisen between the Doctors of Divinity and Esquires—the Doctors claiming, clamorously, to walk immediately after the Knights, and the Esquires as stoutly asserting that the churchmen of Scotland have no precedence whatever, whether with or without the possession of academical degrees. To my surprise, W——, Oxonian as he is, appears to have been hostile to the pretensions of the reverend graduates; but it must be owned, there is at least some colour of reason in what he says on this subject. "The degree of doctor in divinity in the English Universities," says he, "is allowed in England to confer very high rank, but then it is a degree which pre-supposes great standing in the University which has conferred it; and, besides, the fees attending its assumption are sufficient to prevent its being thought of except by men who have some very high station in the church. But here this degree is conferred by the Universities on whomsoever they please—even the meanest of your English dissenters get it for the asking—and the fees are a mere bagatelle. Now, if you admit that this degree, so easily got and given, can confer any title to precedence, it is evident that, in a very short time, there would not be a single Geneva cloak in Scotland, that would not cover a doctor in theology. There is no statute on the subject here as there is in England, and I think it would be a very great absurdity to proceed upon so slender a thing as the general *ex facie* analogy of the two cases. The truth is," continued he, "that the subject of precedence in Scotland is a very difficult affair, principally owing, no doubt, to the long absence of the court. We have no such legal style as Esquire—unless for a few particular offices—Knights, Gentlemen, and Burgesses, were all the old gradations recognised among

our commoners. Now, in the present state of things, there are very few Knights, and it would be a very hard thing to say who are and who are not Gentlemen—so that I suspect we are all, in the eye of the law, pretty much upon a level. I except, however, the Barons, (or lords of manors,) and all, indeed, who hold to any considerable extent of the crown *in capite;* these, I am quite sure, have a fixed precedence in the law, as well as in the common sense of the affair. The doctors acted very sillily in stirring in the question. But how, after all, was the thing to be arranged? If they have no precedence, as I think they have none, as little, surely, have nineteen-twentieths of these soi-disant esquires who disputed with them—advocates—writers—merchants —any body.—Where is the fustian-sleeved clerk now-a-days that does not write himself *esquire?* As for the undergraduated clergy, I confess I know not what their place should be. They, themselves, in former times, seem to have put it low enough; for even in the wording of their notable masterpiece, the Covenant, the style runs—'We, the noblemen, gentlemen, burgesses, *and* ministers of Scotland.' What a *tempestas in matulâ* is here!—and yet," added the candid critic, "I confess I should not much admire seeing one of these crop-ears thrusting himself out of a room before the blood of W——; I never heard that their kingdom was one of this world; but still—if they are to have precedence any where, surely it should be here at the General Assembly of their Kirk. As it is, the dispute has been waived by those in authority—and we walk as we may—so *allons!*"

In the meantime we had been advancing up the magnificent High-Street of Edinburgh, which was lined on either side by Heavy Dragoons and Connaught Rangers, and in every window and peeping-hole over the heads of these, by clusters of faces as eager as ever gazed on the triumph of Pompey. It is certainly rather an imposing thing, this procession. On its commencement, the ovation was greeted by a musical band, with "God save the King," and all along its progress,

there was the usual quantity of "stinking breath," uttered by the crowd of admirers. What occupied the principal share of my attention, was still the picturesque appearance of the clergy, who graced the triumph of the Lord Commissioner—

——— "quos trachet feroces,
Per sacrum clivum, merito decorus
Fronde Sygambros."

Several rows of them moved immediately in my neighbourhood, and, to my mind, there was something not a little fine and imposing in their progression, moving solemnly as they did, in the same style that Milton ascribes to a very dissimilar and opposite class of black-coats,

"With fixed thoughts,
Moving in silence to soft pipes, that charmed
Their painful steps o'er the burnt soil."

I saw their polished heads gleaming under the meridian sun, and their hats decently carried under their arms—nay, such was the heat of the day, aided, no doubt, by the natural fervour of their zealous temperaments, that I could see their waving handkerchiefs, red or white, frequently lifted to foreheads marked with all the symbols of profound reflection. I even thought that some of them looked thirsty, as if they had not swallowed a drop of liquid the preceding evening—but this was probably a mistake. Although they moved in silence, yet I could trace here and there copious capacities of eloquence in the configuration of their mute lips—I longed to hear these imprisoned meanings let loose—but was "patient in my strong desire," as I knew they were going to the proper place where they would get all manner of relief; and I witnessed their approach to the Cathedral of St. Giles's, with something of the same pleasure which brightens the eyes of a Spanish way-farer, when he sees some goodly half-dozen of swollen wine-bags carried into the hostelleria where he is about to put up for the evening.

To a person of a reflective mind, I think the concourse of clergymen which takes place at this time, is eminently adapted to convey ideas of a picturesque and romantic nature. The different pastors whom I saw moving before or beside me might be supposed to carry in their persons a good many characteristic traces of the parishes and regions from which they respectively had arrived, to do honour to this great annual Feast of their Temple. I could easily recognise the inhabitant of a wild and tempestuous region, by his weather-beaten cheek-bones, his loose locks, and the loud and dissonant notes of his voice, if at any time he chanced to speak even to his neighbour. In seeing him, one thinks of the stunted crops of oats, that lie spread in patches upon the desolate hills among which his spire arises. Among many other inconveniences and annoyances he has to contend with, we think also of the lank Seceders, which are, it may be supposed, the natural product of such a soil, and we even conceive to ourselves, with a sympathetic liveliness of imagination, the shapeless, coach-roofed, spireless meeting-house which they have erected, or may even be in the very act of erecting, opposite to the insulted windows of his manse. The clergyman of a lower and more genial parish, may equally be distinguished by his own set of peculiarities suitable to his abode. Such as come from good shooting countries, above all, from the fine breezy braes of the North, are to be known by the tightness and activity of their well-gaitered legs—they are the σκηπτοῦχοι of the Kirk—and, by a knowing cast of the eye, which seems better accustomed to watch the motions of a pointer, than to decipher the points of a Hebrew Bible. On the other hand, those accustomed to the "*pabula læta*" of flatter grounds, are apt to become unwieldy, and to think that the best sport is to catch hold of wheaten sheaves, which do not run away from them like the hares or muir-fowl. The clergymen of the cities and towns again, we recognised by the superior ease of their air—not staring up to the windows like the rustics—by the comparative smoothness of their faces, which are used to more

regular shaving, to say nothing of umbrellas, and the want of long rides in the wind and frost—but most of all by the more urbane style of their vestures. Their coats, waistcoats, and breeches, do not present the same picturesque diversities of ante-diluvian outline—they have none of those portentous depths of flap—none of those huge horny buttons of black paper—none of those coats, shaped from the rough pulpit hangings, put up in honour of the umwhile laird's *funeral*—no well-hoarded rich satin or silk waistcoats, with Queen Elizabeth taperings downward—no breeches of corduroy or velveteen, hanging in luxurious looseness about their thighs—none of those close-kissing boots, finally, with their dirk-like sharpness of toe, or those huge shoes of neat's-hide, on which the light of Day and Martin has never deigned to beam. Their hats, in like manner, are fashioned in some tolerable conformity with the fashion of the day—neither sitting close about their ears, with no rims at all, nor projecting dark Salvator shadows over the whole physiognomy, like the slouches of a Spanish bandit—nor indulging in any of those lawless curves and twists, prospective, retrospective, introspective, and extraspective, from under which the unkempt tresses of the rural brethren may at times be seen "streaming like meteors to the troubled air." They have gloves to their hands, and smooth canes to their fingers, and they move along with the deliberately dignified aspect of men who are sensible that it is no longer their destiny to "waste their sweetness on the desert air." They have, indeed, a marvellous suavity of look about them. The extensive intercourse with mankind, which their profession must favour and promote, cannot fail to press frequently upon their attention the laws of true urbanity and agreeableness. And although myself a medical man, and aware, from experience, that the practice of a physician is calculated to make him see a good deal into human life, yet I willingly acknowledge that the clergyman is in habits of meeting with his fellow-creatures, under relations in which a much greater variety of sentiment is displayed, and which are better adapted to bring before

his view all the chequered joys and griefs of humanity. I remember, David, once upon a time being called upon to visit Miss Barbara B——, who had got a fit of the tooth-ache. Her colour was gone, her cheek was swollen, her eye distorted and diminished, her whole countenance disfigured—and her person, under the influence of pain, appeared in the most unfavourable point of view, so that she inspired for the time no other feeling but that of compassion. I drew her tooth, (for you know an M. D. must not stand upon his P's and Q's in Cardigan,) and went off. Some-time after I was invited to her marriage, when I found my worthy friend, the Rev. Mr. David Williams, had been engaged to perform the ceremony. The damsel had now recovered her looks, and stood blushing before the priest, in all the attractiveness of youth and high health. When the service was concluded, my reverend friend was the first, if I mistake not, to salute the rosy lips of the bride, after which he was presented with a tall bumper of Madeira, and a huge slice of cake, stuffed with almonds, which so engrossed his attention, that he could make no articulate reply for some minutes to the simplest question. Upon observing all which, I shook my head sagaciously, saying inwardly, "Ah, David, thou hast chosen a profession, which, like the magic of the poet, introduces you to the 'gayest, happiest attitudes of things.'"

Ever your's,

P. M.

P. S. In my next I shall introduce you to the Presbyterian Convocation, in the aisle of St. Giles's.

LETTER LVIII.

TO THE SAME.

My dear Williams,

There was such a crowd of people of all ages and conditions about the gate, that, in spite of all our pomp *of macers* and pages, we had some difficulty in getting access to the interior of the edifice—and after we had got within its walls, we had still a new set of difficulties to encounter in the lobbies of its interior, before the aisle set apart for the purposes of the General Assembly received our train. Nay, even within the aisle itself, the squeeze of ministers and elders, bustling to their places, was another source of delay. At last, however, the Commissioner mounted his throne, which is a huge elbow chair, placed under a red canopy, at one side of the room, and we, who had come thither as part of his retinue, found ourselves accommodated on his right, where, according to custom, a certain number of benches had been left vacant for our reception. My foot, in the meantime, had received a sad squeeze on the most tender part of its convalescent surface, and some minutes elapsed after I was seated, before I found myself in a condition to survey the scene before me, with any thing like the usual Morrisian eye of collectedness and coolness.

The Assembly aisle is a square apartment, vaulted overhead like the rest of the Cathedral, but divided from its nave by a long dark lobby or two below, and above, by some galleries with glass-folding doors, through which a certain portion of the *profanum vulgus* may make shift to thrust their noses, and contemplate somewhat of the venerable scene. Opposite to this side, in the space between two tall shapeless windows, is situated the canopy as aforesaid, elevated considerably above the area of the place—from whence, "high on a throne of royal state," the Commissioner looks down in theoretic calmness upon the more active part of the

Convocation—his throne being surrounded with a due complement of awkward, chubby-cheeked pages, in long red coats, and serving-men, of different descriptions, in the colours of his own livery. Among these attendants of the mimic monarch, I could not help recognising, with some emotions of merriment, Duncan M'Nab, and various of the cadies, his brethren—for, certainly, my old friends cut a strange enough figure in their new and gorgeous costumes of blue and red, some clad like beef-eaters, and some like lackies, but all powdered as finely as butter and flour could make them, and all squeezing, or attempting to squeeze their weather-beaten features into an expression of decorum and gravity, little consistent with the usual habits either of their minds or their occupations. I should, perhaps, make an exception in favour of Duncan; for I must admit, that this crafty Celt bore his new honours—bag, buckles, and all—with a measure of meek composure in his aspect, which showed that he had taken the metamorphosis in comparative tranquillity of spirit. And, after all, perhaps, the powdered young puppies of plebeian pages, with their cheese-toasters bruising each others shins ever and anon, were the most absurd part of the whole group. So much for what Homer would have called, "οἱ ἀμφὶ τὸν Βασιλῆα." Immediately under, and with his back towards the Commissioner, sits the Moderator, or Clerical President of the Assembly. A green table before him is surrounded by several clerks, arrayed in Geneva cloaks and bands, and a few of the more leading members of either party in the Kirk, "in close recess and secret conclave sitting." From this table the benches rise in all directions upwards, lodging, row upon row, the ordinary stipendiarii of the ecclesiastical host. The arrangement of these, however, is, although tumultuous, by no means fortuitous. They stick, on the contrary, with the most senatorial pertinacity each to his own side of the Senate-house—the right side of the throne being occupied exclusively by the *Moderates*, while, on the left hand, sit, equally pure and uncontaminated, the representatives of the *Wildmen*. Some

tiny galleries, on either side, are appropriated to the use of ministers not actually members of the Assembly, and preachers and students of divinity, who come thither partly to suck in wisdom from the droppings of the "great consult"—partly, no doubt, if one may judge from their lean and scarecrow physiognomies, to indulge in fond dreams of future repletion, inspired by the contemplation of the goodly paunches of the beneficed brethren—

> A thousand demi-gods on golden seats,
> Frequent and *full*——

Above these again, high up on either side, is another gallery, set apart not for the gods, but the *goddesses*—where among others of the fair visitors,

> ——" whose eyes
> Reign influence and dispense the prize,"

I could perceive the sagacious countenances of some dozen or more of the Bas-blues of Auld Reekie. I know not whether, in this quarter also, the division of parties be as strictly observed as in the lower regions of the place. I could not pretend, at least, to distinguish *prima facie* the *Moderates* from the *Wild* of the womankind; but, perhaps, Muretus would have remarked that the majority of the "Mulieres Doctæ," preferred the left side of the throne.*

But, perhaps, in truth, these *noms de guerre*, by which the two rival parties which have sprung up among the descendants of John Knox are distinguished, may be almost as inappropriate in the lower as in the upper parts of the aisle. I was a stranger to the existence of the parties themselves, or very nearly so, till I came into Scotland, and even now I am much at a loss to know what are the distinguishing tenets to which they respectively adhere. They are both, in profession at least, sound Calvinists—for whatever may be

* See Muretus. Opuscula, tom. XIII. p. 374.

said of our XXXIX Articles, not even Paley himself could have pretended to consider the "Confession of Faith," as a specimen of peace-promoting ambiguity and vagueness. Every thing is laid down there as broadly and firmly as if Calvin himself had held the pen, the very morning after the burning of Servetus; and the man who holds a living in the Scottish Kirk, cannot possibly do so with common honesty, unless he be a firm believer in the whole of a theological system—which, whatever may be thought of it in some other respects, must at least be admitted to be a far more rational thing than our English high-churchmen would wish us to believe—which, at all events, possesses the merit of singular compactness and harmony within itself—and which, moreover, can number among its defenders in past times, not a few, to whom, whether considered as divines or as authors, none of the theologians of these latter days on either side of the Tweed, are worthy, as the phrase runs, of holding the candle. So far as doctrine is concerned, the two parties therefore profess themselves to be agreed; and, indeed, I believe the great leaders on either side of the Kirk have a pride in showing themselves at all times in their sermons, to be alike the genuine disciples of their Institute. The truth, however, may perhaps be, that wherever the business of any polity, civil or ecclesiastical, is conducted in popular assemblies of debate, the infirmities of human nature make it necessary that at least two parties should exist; and when once they do exist, it is odds but they will find some feasible pretences for their separation. Of old, as you well know, the whole of the Presbyterian ministers were Whigs—and it was only by means of the stubborn zeal with which they adhered to the political principles of that state party, that they were enabled to revive so often, and at last to establish on its present firm basis, a system of church government, long so odious to the holders of the executive power. But after the oppressive measures, under which the internal spirit of their sect long throve and prospered, exactly in proportion as its external circumstances suffered—after these had

been laid aside, and the Kirk found herself in secure possession of all her privileges and emoluments, all those varieties of political opinion which prevailed among the body of the nation, soon began to find adherents in the very bosom of the Kirk—and men ere long learned to think, that a Geneva cloak and a Scottish stipend might just be as well applied to the uses of a Tory as to those of a Whig. And so, by degrees, (the usual influences of the crown and aristocracy finding their way, no doubt among other things, into the minds of churchmen, against whom neither crown nor aristocracy any longer contended)—there arose even in the Kirk of Scotland a party of Tory ministers and elders. These are they, who in general go by the name of the Moderates; but that appellation—originally, I am told, assumed by themselves, and sarcastically adopted by their adversaries—is not derived from the style of their political opinions, but rather meant to denote the more gentle and reasonable interpretation which they would profess to put upon the religious tenets of the Kirk. The Whigs, in like manner, are called *Wild-men*, or *High-flyers*, entirely on account of the alleged ultra-Calvinistic austerity of their dogmas. The plain fact of the matter is, that both names are, like most other nick-names, sufficiently absurd—and were I to judge from what I have observed in the General Assembly, I should certainly be inclined to think that the attributes of *Wildness* and *Moderation* are by no means confined to the opposite sides of the aisle, in the same regular manner as are the bodies of those to whom they furnish watch-words of party-strife.

Of late, however, the emptiness of this distinction has become infinitely more apparent than ever; the few questions of any sort of moment, upon which their disputes were made to hinge, having been all settled—and there being, in truth, no longer any matter of ecclesiastical belief or practice, in regard to which it is possible for them to awaken the full zeal of their respective adherents. Of the great strife-producing questions, the law of Patronage was the last—and you may see a copious account of the way in which it was

settled, in Sir Henry Moncrieff's Life of the late Dr. Erskine. The dispute about Mr. Leslie's professorship, is the only thing which has of late years excited any very general interest, or called into full action any of the old animosities. But even that was of too limited and personal a nature, to be considered as any thing more than a passing tempest—and the horizon soon became pretty calm when the first tumult of it blew over. Since that time this tranquillity has been pretty regularly preserved—and the Moderates and the Wildmen may be seen, year after year, drawn up against each other without having an inch of debateable land to fight about. So that the General Assembly, of late years, may rather be considered as a kind of annual wappenshaw, than an actual campaign. The popinjays at which they shoot, are "trifles light as air"—and their only instruments are a few harmless ἔπεα πτερόεντα. I am sorry, in one point of view, that this is the case; for I should undoubtedly have seen, with much satisfaction, a few specimens of the more true and fervid hostilities of the olden time. Nay, even to have heard the divines of the North arguing "in stern divan," about the most profound questions in metaphysics—and launching their arrows, *pleno impetu*, against the Manes of their old adversary, David Hume—all which they did to much purpose in the Leslie case—even this would have been a luxury, for the sake of which alone I should have thought my shandry-danning to the North well bestowed. But, "*ces sont des choses passés*," as the French infidels say—and I must be contented with having seen the brawny forms, and heard the hoarse voices of heroes, whose spears have in a great measure been turned into pruning-hooks. But I forget that you have not seen them, and that you will expect me to describe what I have seen.

I wish I had seen the Assembly of the Kirk in the last age, on many accounts, but most of all, because its affairs were then directed, and its parties led, by men whose remarkable talents have not been inherited by any of those who now occupy the same places. The leaders of the Kirk,

at the present time, are highly respectable men; but nobody pretends to disguise the fact, that they are but indifferent representatives of Robertson and Erskine; not the worst evidence of which circumstance may, perhaps, be found in the exactness with which all the peculiarities of these departed leaders are still held in remembrance, even by those who never saw them, and, indeed, the zeal with which I myself have heard their merits enlarged upon by many who take comparatively little interest in matters merely ecclesiastical. The Historian, to be sure, was a person of so much importance in all points of view, that it is no wonder the circumstances of his behaviour should have been treasured up affectionately both by those who agreed, and those who disagreed with him as to the affairs of the Kirk. But his rival was nothing but an ecclesiastic; so that the honour in which his memory is held, may, perhaps, be considered as a still more unequivocal testimony to his ecclesiastical virtues. The truth is, that they were both men of great *talents* —great virtues—great prudence—and great piety—and the union of these excellencies was enough, without any farther addition, to make their brethren of the Kirk proud of their presence living, and of their memories, now that they are dead. In their time, the ascendance they had—each over his particular party in the church—was entire and unquestioned—but each bore his honours so meekly, that even his adversaries rejoiced in acknowledging that his honours were due. For myself, I hear them both spoken of in terms of almost equal respect by both parties. The little irritations of temper which each, no doubt, encountered now and then, when alive, have all passed away—even the shadows of them; and nothing is thought of but the honour which both of them equally conferred upon the church to which they belonged.

These two leaders of the Church of Scotland were, as it happened, colleague-ministers in the same Kirk in Edinburgh; but the party differences which separated them so widely in the Ecclesiastical Courts, were never permitted

to disturb the kindness of that co-operative zeal with which they discharged the common functions thus entrusted to their care. While the minor champions of the two parties were found disturbing with their jealousies, and envies, and aversions, every corner of the country—these excellent men might be seen, year after year, through a long period of their lives, walking together in brotherly love to the church in which they both officiated—each recommending to his people, by his example, to listen with Christian confidence to the instructions of the other—forgetting utterly the paltry disputes of Presbyteries, Synods, and Assemblies, in the presence of their common Father and their common flock—and looking down with equal pity from the elevation of their common love and faith, upon all the little heart-burnings which agitated the bosoms of their less intelligent and less liberal adherents. The example which they thus afforded was, of course, valuable in proportion to the reputation they enjoyed—and in either case this was very great. Of Robertson, nothing need be said—his genius would have made him an object of reverence in any age and country—and in the age and country in which he did appear, there were a thousand circumstances which could not fail to enhance the natural value of his great and splendid genius. He was one of the most elegant, and he was by far the most popular, of the authors of his day in Britain; and he formed, in public estimation, the centre of a brilliant constellation, which rose with him on the hitherto dark horizon of the literature of Scotland. He was also at the head of the greatest University in Scotland; and, altogether, it is very easy to see what a powerful influence such a man as he was, must have exerted over the minds of those who lived in the country which he so eminently adorned—above all, of those who could not but feel a great and just pride in seeing such a man discharging the duties of their own profession. His mild and elegant manners, too, could not be without their effect, even upon those who were comparatively rude and coarse—and the graceful, yet energetic eloquence which he

possessed, must have established for him a superiority which few could dispute in any popular assembly.

Neither was Dr. Erskine, on the other hand, without some peculiar advantages, beside his professional talents and virtues. He was a man of high birth—being a near descendant of the same house of Buchan, which has of late years been so prolific in genius—and the share which many branches of his family had taken in the internal convulsions of the country, had given him additional claims to respect in the eyes of a large proportion of those who followed his political, no less than his religious persuasion. He possessed, moreover, a plentiful estate, and both his birth and his wealth enabled him to make an appearance in the world quite different from what is at all usual among the ministers of the Kirk. These things would probably have been of themselves sufficient to render Dr. Erskine an object of more than common estimation among his brethren, even had his talents been of a comparatively unimportant class; but conjoined with the natural influence of a most masculine understanding—and that too improved and enriched by a very uncommon share of learning—it is no wonder that their effect should have been great indeed. If you look into his Sermons—and I have often seen them in the hands of clergymen of our church—you will have no difficulty in seeing that the grasp of this man's intellect was of a very uncommon order—that his metaphysical acuteness was an admirable weapon—and that the noble simplicity of his feelings and sentiments enabled him to wield it with the most safe and beautiful dexterity. You will also see that he had at his command the treasures of an erudition far more extensive, and at the same time far more profound, than is in fashion even among the best theologians of our own time; and you will not be surprised to learn, that he lived on terms of equal and familiar correspondence with the giant intellect of Warburton, or that Hurd should have pronounced him to be the "deepest divine he ever knew after the Bishop of Gloucester." Learning of this kind, however, must have been a much greater wonder in Scotland than it could have been elsewhere; for it is a singular enough thing, that although no country has been more distinguished than

this for religious zeal, and although no country, I firmly believe, possesses a more religious population than this, Scotland has been poor beyond all example in the production of eminent theologians. The Kirk of Scotland has produced many sensible, and a few elegant sermon-writers; but she has nothing to show beside our great phalanx of biblical or doctrinal divines. Dr. Erskine, however, was skilled not only in the branches of what is commonly called theological reading, but in many things beside, which must have enabled him to throw new lights upon the deeper parts of his theology. He was skilled, above all, in profounder kinds of philosophy than his countrymen or ours are fond of; and, among all modern authors, he used to say his chief favourite was Mendelssohn. Some Latin translations from the works of that illustrious Hebrew excited his first curiosity in regard to the Philosophy of Germany, and he acquired the language of that country, at a very advanced period of his life, without the assistance of any master. In all things he was an original man; and he carried with him into all his pursuits a full measure of that high and dauntless ardour, without which nothing great ever was accomplished in any department. I have seen a very fine engraving from a picture of him painted long ago by Raeburn, and I shall bring a copy of it with me to hang in my study beside my uncle's old favourites, Barrow, Hooker, Butler, Warburton, and Horsley. It is an easy matter to see in his physiognomy the marks of profound reflection, blended and softened with all Christian gentleness of heart and mind. For a better portrait than the pencil can make, you may turn to Guy Mannering; you will there find it drawn to the life—(so I am assured)—by one who has preserved many fine things for Scotland, and few things better worthy of preservation than the image of this eminent divine.

On the left hand of the Moderator, I saw the successor of Dr. Erskine in the chieftainship of the Whig party of the Kirk of Scotland—Sir Henry Moncrieff. This gentleman is the representative of one of the oldest families in this kingdom, and stands, I believe, very near the head in the list of its baronets; and, like his predecessor, he also no doubt,

owes not a little of his pre-eminence to the influence of his birth and rank. The truth is, that these are things which always do command a very great share of respect every where—and in Scotland more than almost any where else *in* the world. You see that even the democrats of Westminster cannot shake off their old English prejudices in regard to these matters; they will never listen to their Gale Joneses and their Bristol Hunts, while they have any chance of being harangued by mistaken *gentlemen*, such as Burdett, Kinnaird, and Hobhouse. The herd of plebeian clergymen in the General Assembly of the Kirk of Scotland confess the same innate veneration for symbols of wordly distinction, by the half-proud, half-humble glances which they are perpetually casting towards the orange-tawney ribbon and Nova Scotia badge that decorate the breast of the only man of title in their body. Sir Henry, indeed, does not require these symbols to attest his claims to aristocratical distinction. His air is decidedly that of a man of birth and station—he holds himself with the true mien of a dignitary—and looks (under favour,) when surrounded by his adherents, very much like a Lord Bishop receiving the bows of his country curates at a visitation. All this, however, is very far from constituting his sole right to the eminence he holds. The marks of strong vigorous intellect are planted thick upon his phisiognomy—his forehead is compact and full of nerve, and the head rises into a superb height in the region of will—his nose is thick set between his brows, and the nostrils are curved like those of an Hercules. His lips are compressed with a decision of purpose that nothing can shake; and the whole face abounds in square massy lines, that pronounce his temperament to be that of one fond of gladiatorship. His smile, too, is full of a courtly suavity, which shows that he is skilful as well as bold—and, what is best of all for a leader of a party, the general air of the man is stamped with the expression of sheer honesty. Nobody can look upon the Baronet without perceiving that nature meant him to be a ruler, not a subject; and, if I may judge from the specimens I have seen, he is, in truth, a very admirable master in the great art of rule. He seems, indeed, to have a pro-

digious tact in the management of his tumultuous array; and the best proof of it is, that those whom he leads do not seem to have the least suspicion of the extent of their subjection. When he speaks, one is put very strongly in mind of the forensic eloquence of his son, which I think I have already described to you. Like him, his voice and gestures are harsh—like him, he disdains, or seems to disdain, all the elegancies of the art—but, like him, he plants himself resolutely before his difficulties—and, like him, if nothing else will do, he cuts the knots with the decision of a genuine Macedonian. The contrast which his plain downright method of attacking the understanding where it should be attacked, presents to the vague illogical rhapsodies of the rural fine speakers from the back rows of the aisle—or to the feeble irresolute middle-sailings of the smooth would-be sages that sit nearer himself—is as striking a thing as possible. But his main excellence seems to lie in the art with which he contrives to correct, almost ere they are made, the blunders of his ambitious—and to nerve, even while they are faltering, the courage and decision of his timorous associates. He is a great politician; and, had he come into Parliament, I have very little doubt his peculiar faculties would have made him as powerful a person there as he is here in the General Assembly of the Kirk.

Nearly opposite to him, at the other hand of the Moderator, sits Dr. Inglis, the chief of the Moderate or Tory party—or rather, perhaps, the chief of a small college of cardinals, by whom that party is managed, as the other party is by the undivided vigour of Sir Henry Moncrieff. The doctor is an ungainly figure of a man at first sight, but, on looking a little, one easily observes in him also the marks both of good breeding and strong intellect. His voice is peculiarly unfortunate—or, rather, he has two voices, a hoarse and a sharp, from the one to the other of which he sometimes makes different digressions in the course of the same sentence. But when once the impression of this disagreeable voice is got over, one finds that it is the vehicle both of excellent language and of excellent sense. He does not appear to speak under the same violent impulses of personal will which cha-

racterize the Baronet's eloquence; but he is quite as logical in his reasoning, and perhaps still more dexterous in the way in which he brings his arguments to bear upon the conclusion to which he would conduct his hearers. In his illustrations, too, he displays the command of a much more copious reading, and a much more lively fancy than his rival. And even his voice, when he touches upon any topic of feeling, reveals a something totally unexpected by those who hear *him* for the first time—its harshest notes being, as it were, softened and deepened into a mysterious sort *of* tremor which is irresistibly impressive, in spite of its uncouthness. The secret is, that Dr. Inglis is a man of genuine power, and the eloquence of such men cannot be stayed by any minor obstacles from working its way to its object.

But I am forgetting the order in which all these things appeared to me.

P. M.

LETTER LIX.

TO THE SAME.

In witnessing the forms of the Presbyterian Convocation, I could not help feeling a greater degree of interest than I should otherwise have done, from the notion that in them, and, indeed, in the whole aspect of the Assembly, not a little might be perceived of the same appearances which characterized, two centuries ago, those more important meetings, in which the Presbyterian party in Church and State took the lead and direction. On the first day of the Assembly, for example, after the Commissioner had delivered his credentials, which consisted of a long pious epistle upon parchment, from the Prince Regent to the Ministers and Elders in General Assembly convened, wherein his Royal Highness stimulates them to a still more zealous discharge of their respective duties, by all manner of devout arguments, and copious quotations from the minor Prophets and Epistles—and

after the Moderator had returned thanks for this favour, and intimated the firm resolution of himself and his brethren to profit, as far as the infirmities of their nature might permit, by the faithful admonitions of "the nursing father of our Zion,"—after these ceremonies had been duly gone through, the whole of the forenoon, that is from twelve till five o'clock, was devoted to a succession of extemporaneous or seemingly extemporaneous prayers delivered by the Moderator himself, and after him by various clergymen in different quarters of the house, who appeared to call upon each other for addresses to the Deity, in the same way as the members of less sacred assemblies call upon each other for glees and catches. This reminded me most strongly of the descriptions which Clarendon gives of the opening of the Sessions of the Rump —to say nothing of the committees of major-generals under Cromwell. The long, dreary, dreamy, wandering, threadless discourses, too, which some of the reverend performers took occasion to deliver, reminded me of some of the crafty vaguenesses of old Noll himself, and the more sincere absurdities of Sir Harry Vane. A few of the more sensible seniors, and most of the younger members, appeared to have some faint notion that a prayer to the Almighty ought not to be a composition of the same class with a homily to sinful men; but, in general, those who conducted the devotions of the Assembly on this occasion, although they began and concluded with the usual invocation and glorification, did not in fact pray, but preach, throughout the body of their addresses. It seems to me that there is something most offensively irreverent in the style of these extemporaneous effusions—Nay, I do not hesitate to say, that their character was such as entirely to take away from me all notion of joining mentally in the devotions which they were probably meant to express. Under the mask of supplication to the Deity, it seemed to be considered as quite a proper thing to introduce all manner of by-hits at the errors and corruptions observed, not only in the practice, but in the creed also of our fellow-men; and it was easy to see, that instead of humbly pouring out the aspirations of a devout spirit before the throne of Grace, the intention of the praying minister was not unfrequently to

show off his own skill in clearing up the darkness of points which would never have been left mysterious in the oracles of God had it been judged meet that our reason should fully comprehend them. And yet in spite of all this—the appearance of sincerity and ardour was so strong in most of the addresses, that it was impossible to listen to them without feeling respect for those from whose lips they proceeded, and I had no difficulty in believing that custom and ancient prejudice might have been sufficient to render them the most acceptable vehicles for the warmest devotional feelings of those whose serious and earnest physiognomies met my too-excursive eye in every quarter of the Assembly.

As the hour of dinner approached, however, I could not avoid observing a considerable diminution in the attentiveness of the majority of the audience, and, at last, an apparently interminable orator was fairly jogged on the elbow by his neighbours, as the finger of the clock began to come within a few lines of the appointed period. W—— and I adjourned with many others to the Royal Hotel, where it is the custom, during the sitting of the Assembly, for such as have attended the levee of the Commissioner, to be present on the same day at the more substantial ceremonial of his dinner. The feast was a pretty thing in its way, and did credit to the state of the bold individual who has adventured to finger the napkin of the peerless Macculloch. The company, too, was splendid at my end of the table, where the more fashionable members of the party were congregated within hearing of the Commissioner himself. Toward the other extremity, at which his Grace's purse-bearer officiated as croupier, the company seemed to consist mostly of clerical personages—and I thought the broad hungry faces of some of these rural divines looked somewhat aghast upon the fine Frenchified dishes, omelets, orissoles, crocats, and fricandeaus, which smoaked in all the pomp of garlic beneath their sharp nostrils.—"Fat have we gotten hereawa?"—cried one of them—whose keen brazen voice penetrated quite across the room, in very indecorous distinctness, "Fat have we here, Dr. Macbrair?—I wish I had a guid platefu' of beef an' reets—this is

feed fit for naebody but Moushers."—"Ye say naething but the trowth," said the other—"an binna a bit fite fish, I've got naething to ca' a moothfu' since I cam here the day."—A compassionate waiter, however, soon brought two large trenchers of roast mutton from the side-table, and smoothed effectually the clamours of these ravenous Aberdonians. They were quite silent for some ten minutes, I imagine; but a salver of hock being carried round, they both drank with precipitation of the unwonted fluid—and I perceived them spitting and sputtering afterwards, as if they had swallowed vinegar. I heard them muttering something about "pooshening"—but the poison came my own way, and my attention was diverted from the conclusion of their colloquy.

The dinner, however, was upon the whole rather a stately than an agreeable one; and although the wine was good, I can scarcely say I regretted the earliness of the hour at which the Commissioner rose, and the party broke up. It was no more than seven when we departed, so that I carried W—— home with me to Oman's, and gave him a bottle or two of better claret than his Grace's—for wine, after all, is an equivocator with gout as well as with some other distempers, and if it accelerates the advent of the fit, there is no question it hastens also the departure of its relics. Such, at least, is the creed of

PETER MORRIS, M. D. &c. &c. &c.

LETTER LX.

TO THE SAME.

I WENT often to the Assembly during its sittings; but, in general, I found the business in which they were engaged of a nature so dull, that I was contented to make my visits short. It was only on one day that I was induced to prolong my stay during the whole sederunt—and, in truth, I am given to understand, that it is only when subjects of the sort then discussed come before them, that even among the clergy

themselves, much interest or attention is excited. On entering the house, indeed, I could not but remark, that the rows set apart for Members of Assembly were garnished with a plentiful admixture of persons, obviously of a totally different description from those with whose faces I had formed some acquaintance on the "day of prayers." Here and there among the sober clergymen, on either side of the house, might be seen scattered knots of young men, who wore indeed black coats, but whose whole air and mien were decidedly the reverse of clerical. Not a few of their faces, moreover, were already familiar to me, although I could not *at first* bring myself to believe that they were actually the same faces I had so often speculated upon, among the far different accompaniments of the Outer-House and its side-bars. A friend, however, to whom I applied for information, told me at once that my suspicions were perfectly well founded, and that the young gentlemen whose unecclesiastical appearance had struck my observation, were no other than so many juvenile advocates, to whom, it would seem, their respective Presbyteries and Boroughs in the country had entrusted the duties of representing them in the General Assembly of the Church. You have heard, no doubt, that a certain number of Lay Elders are admitted to the counsels of all the Ecclesiastical Courts in Scotland—but nobody certainly would have suspected that such a venerable designation could be applied to such persons as these young limbs of the law. Could the spirit of Knox re-animate once more the dust that sleeps beneath the chancel of St. Giles's, what wrath would suffuse the "grim visage of verjuice, frowning over a red beard in shape like unto an otter's tail," on seeing the seats which such laymen as George Buchanan once held, profaned by the intrusion of such heirs as these. Truly, the great πειχισπλητες would have deemed it foul scorn that the Scottish Zion should seek her Ruling Elders in the Stove-School.

The case which had induced all these worthies to congregate themselves among the more regular and conscientious members of the Convocation, was that of a Northern Minister, (from the Hebrides, I believe,) who had been ac-

cused of criminal conversation with his house-keeper, and who now, after having been tried in succession by the minor jurisdictions of the Presbytery and Provincial Synod, was about to have his guilt or innocence finally determined by the supreme fiat of the infallible Assembly. The moment his case was announced, I observed an unusual commotion in every part of the house—ministers, laymen, and ladies, all alike leaning forward to catch the *ipsissima verba* of the peccant parson's dittay. It did not seem to be held proper, however, that the last named body of auditors should be indulged with the full gratification of their curiosity, for several of the leading ministers round the Moderator's table began immediately by nods, winks, and pointings, to intimate to them the necessity of their withdrawing themselves. Nods and winks, however, did not produce much effect; and Dr. Macknight, the principal secretary of the Assembly, was obliged to make himself very conspicuous by a terrific use of his lungs in exhortation, before the whole of the fair visiters could be prevailed upon to take themselves off. After they were gone, the remaining audience seemed to feel themselves at liberty to listen with more undisguised eagerness to the minutiæ of the affair; and, indeed, the prolixity of the details to which they listened, was no less extravagant than disgusting. For myself, after hearing an hour or two of the thing, I became heartily sick of it, and would have retired had it not been for the sake of the specimens of clerical eloquence which I hoped to hear after the evidence had been gone through. Even this, however, did not gratify me quite so much as I had expected. Dr. Inglis and Sir Harry Moncrieff seemed to be contented with delivering their opinions (which, by the way, exactly coincided) in as few words as possible, and the banquet of expatiating and commenting was left almost untouched for the less delicate lips of the *minorum gentium Dei* from the country. The more conspicuous of the clerical orators, were Dr. Skene Keith, a shrewd, bitter, sarcastic humourist from Aberdeenshire, and Mr. Lapslie, an energetic rhapsodist from the west of Scotland. The last-mentioned individual is undoubtedly the most enthusiastic speaker I ever

heard. He is a fine, tall, bony man, with a face full of fire, and a bush of white locks, which he shakes about him like the thyrsus of a Bacchanal. He tears his waistcoat open —he bares his breast as if he had scars to show—he bellows—he sobs—he weeps—and sits down at the end of his harangue, trembling all to the fingers' ends like an exhausted Pythoness. He possesses, undoubtedly, many of the natural elements of oratory—but of perfect oratory it may be said, as the Stagyrite has already said of perfect poetry, that it is the affair "ου μανιας τινος αλλα αμφοτερος." I wont trouble you with the minutiæ—the poor minister was at last found innocent—and for how much of his safety he might be indebted to the impassioned defence of Dr. Lapslie, I shall not pretend to guess.

But whatever may be thought of the external shows and forms of their procedure, I should imagine there can be no more than one and the same respectful opinion concerning that severe and scrutinizing style of ecclesiastical discipline, of which such procedure constitutes so remarkable a part. It must be admitted, David, in spite of all our prejudices, that this popular form of church government carries with it manifold advantages. To you, who so well know the present state of discipline in the Church of England—it is not necessary that I should say much on this head. That no clergyman in the Church of Scotland can be suspected of any breach of that decorum, the absolute integrity of which is so necessary to his professional usefulness, without at once subjecting himself to the anxious and jealous investigation of Courts composed as these are—this one circumstance is, of itself, enough to convince me, that the clerical character in Scotland must stand very high in the sacred secureness of its purity. And so, indeed, is the fact, "their enemies themselves being witnesses." Even W——, with all his Episcopalian prejudices, is proud of the uncontaminated character of the Clergy of the Established Church of Scotland, and scruples not to express his wish that some churches, with whose form of government he is better pleased, were better capable of sustaining a comparison with this. For me, I was always less of a bigot than W——

and, really, the more I see of the Kirk, the more do I begin to be of opinion that forms of ecclesiastical government are, after all, of comparatively little avail—and that here, perhaps, as elsewhere, "whate'er is best administered is best."*

* * * * *

* * * * *

Neither, after what I have heard you say so often and so well about the propriety of re-establishing the Ecclesiastical Convocation in England, can I at all doubt of your agreeing with me in admiring the institution of the General Assembly in Scotland. It may be true, that, in the present state of things, few questions of great moment are submitted to the consideration of this Court—and it may be true, that in the mode of considering such questions as are submitted to it, there is much that may call a smile into the cheek of a casual observer. But who can question that the clerical body, and through them the whole of those who adhere to the church of Scotland—receive the most substantial good from this annual meeting, which calls all their representatives together? The very fact that such a meeting takes place, is enough to satisfy one that it is prolific in benefits. From it there must be carried every year, into the remotest districts which contribute to its numbers, a spirit and an impetus that cannot fail to infuse a new life into the whole body of the ecclesiastical polity in Scotland. From it there must spring a union of purpose—a condensation of endeavour—a knowledge of what ought to be done, and a wisdom concerning the mode of doing it—which I fear it is quite impossible the clergymen of a church, ruled without such convocations, should ever effectually rival. I think, in good truth, the churchmen of England should no longer permit themselves to be deprived of the advantages which a General Assembly cannot but confer—advantages, too, which it was always presumed, by the great founders of their own polity,

* Here some reflections, touching the Clergy of Wales, are omitted.

that the Church of England should and must possess. To revive any claims to that political authority, which the Convocation of England formerly possessed, would be entirely absurd and unprofitable; and I think they are not true friends to the church, who throw obstacles in the way of re-establishing the convocation by such hints as these. But there is abundant occasion for a convocation, even although it should have nothing to do with taxation, and little with *politics* of any kind. Beside the general reason of the thing, the example of the Church of Scotland, and the superior success with which its fabric seems to hold out against the encroachment of sectaries, should not be overlooked or disdained. If the clergy of England possessed the means of bringing their intellects into collision, and so of showing what their strength of intellect really is in the discussions of a great Ecclesiastical Court, I have no doubt the world would soon be satisfied that there is no body of men more largely entitled to the respect and confidence of their fellow-countrymen. The puny tribes of Dissenters, who keep up every where a noisy and petulant warfare against the scattered and unsupported ministers of our church, would at once be awed into silence and insignificance by the show of intellectual might—erudition and virtue, which would beam from this majestic Assembly. The ignorant ravings of one set of your enemies, and the cold degrading cant of another still worse set of them, would be alike rebuked into nothingness by the resurrection of the slumbering genius of your Union. I know your feelings on this subject—and I know that your opinions in regard to it have been far more matured by reflection than mine; but here I see with my own eyes the actual operation of a similar engine, and I cannot refrain from expressing to you the impression it makes upon me—too happy should any hint of mine be of the least power in stimulating the zeal of one so much better able to understand and to promote the interests of a church, which, however, you can neither love more warmly, nor venerate more profoundly, than I do.

* * * * *

* * * * *

I have, in some of my former letters, said a good deal about the sceptical style of philosophy prevalent among the Scottish Universities and Literati—and I have also said something about the general influence of the peculiar style of religious belief, adopted by the great body of the nation; but I fear that, in regard to both subjects, my mode of talking may have been calculated to leave you with somewhat erroneous impressions. Of late, since the General Assembly, I have directed my attention much more closely than I had done to the state of religion in this kingdom—I have made it my business to go from church to church in this city, and hear with my own ears all the more celebrated preachers it possesses—things which, indeed, I should have done much earlier, had it not been for the violent prejudices of my good friend, Mr. W——, who insisted, Sunday after Sunday, on my accompanying him to his pew in one particular Episcopalian Chapel, and, I firmly believe, would have thought it a fine thing could he have persuaded me to quit Scotland without having heard a single sermon in a Presbyterian kirk. I rejoice, on every accou··, that I broke through these trammels, and that in consequence of having done so, I shall now have it in my power to present you with much, and, I hope, interesting information, of which you must otherwise have been deprived.

P. M.

LETTER LXI.

TO THE SAME.

I HAVE remarked, that among the people of Scotland, conversation turns much more frequently, and much more fervently, on the character and attainments of individual clergymen, than is at all usual with us in England. Nor does it seem to me that this is any just subject of astonishment, considering what the nature of the Ecclesiastical Establishment in Scotland really is. The disdain of those external formalities,

by which elsewhere so great, and I think so proper, an impression is made on the minds of the people—the absence of all those arts which elsewhere enlist the imagination and fancy of men, on the side of that Faith which rather *subdues* than satisfies our finite Reason—the plain austere simplicity with which the Presbyterian Church invests herself in all her addresses to the intellect of her adherents—all these things may in themselves be rather injudicious than *otherwise, in* the present state of our nature—but all these things contribute, I should suppose, and that neither feebly nor indistinctly, to the importance of the individual priests, into whose hands this church intrusts the administration of her unadorned and unimposing observances. Deprived of the greater part of those time-hallowed and majestic rites, with which the notions of profound piety are in other countries so intimately linked in the minds of mankind, and by which the feelings of piety are so powerfully stimulated and sustained—deprived of all those aids which devotion elsewhere borrows from the senses and the imagination—the Presbyterian Church possesses, in her formal and external constitution, very few of those elements which contribute most effectually to the welfare of the other churches in Christendom. But the most naked ritual cannot prevent the imaginations and the feelings of men from taking the chief part in their piety, and these, debarred from the species of nourishment elsewhere afforded, are here content to seek nourishment of another kind, in the contemplation not of Forms, but of Men. To the devout Presbyterian—the image of his minister, and the idea of his superior sanctity, come instead not only of the whole calender of the Catholic Christian, but of all the splendid liturgies, and chauntings, and pealing organs of our English Cathedrals. The church of Scotland may say with the Greek,—"It is not in wide-spreading battlements, nor in lofty towers, that the security of our city consists—Men are our defence."—*ουκ εστιν τα τειχεα και τα πυργωματα σωτηρ εκαστοις ημων η πολις.*

How great and commanding was the influence which the early ministers of the Presbyterian Church of Scotland exerted over the minds of their people—is well known to you—

and may easily indeed be gathered from all the histories of the times. In those days, of course, the natural effects of the naked ceremonial of the Kirk, were mightily augmented by the persecution which prevented her from making free and open use of its scanty services; so that the Ministers were often not the chief only, but the sole symbols of the faith of those who followed their system, and were regarded as nothing less than so many moveable tabernacles, carrying with them into the wilderness the only visible types of their primitive devotion. Even now, however, there survive no inconsiderable relics of the same prejudices, which then throve so luxuriantly in the "bare and desolated bosoms" of an oppressed and insulted people—growing like the Tannen of Childe Harold,

> "Loftiest on loftiest and least sheltered rocks,
> Rooted in barrenness, where nought below
> Of soil sustained them 'gainst the Alpine shocks
> Of eddying storms."———

A thousand proud, no less than pious recollections, are connected in Scottish minds, with that integrity of their ecclesiastical polity, which was the reward of the long sufferings and constancy of their fore-fathers—and with the persons of those whom they regard as the heirs and offspring of the principal actors in all the scenes of that eventful period. I have already said something of the attempts which were made to represent the first Tales of my Landlord as a series of wanton attacks upon the heroes of the Covenant, and insults against the presbyterian prejudices of the majority of the Scottish people. The best proof of the injustice and absurdity of these attempts, is their total failure. Had the Tale of Old Mortality been written in that spirit, it would not have taken its place, as it has already done, in the cottages of Scotland, beside the "big ha' Bible," and the original rude histories of the seventeenth century. And if more proof were wanting, it would be found in the very different fate which has attended a work of much amusement, and no inconsiderable cleverness, written really and plainly in that

spirit of scoffing and irreverence, which the author of these Novels never could have been capable of displaying—I mean Mr. Charles Kirkpatrick Sharpe's edition of Kirkton's History. Much may, no doubt, be pardoned in a descendant of the murdered archbishop—I speak not of the man, for whom there may be many apologies—but of his book, which cannot be anywise defended when considered *per se*—and which even the Quarterly Review will in vain endeavour to save from that utter neglect, which is at once the most just and the most severe punishment of all such offences against feelings in themselves respectable, and in their effects beneficial.

You will comprehend, then, that the species of devotion with which the Scotch Presbyterians are accustomed to regard the persons of their clergymen, is a much more noble sort of thing than the homage paid to Methodist pastors by their saintly flocks in England. It partakes of the dignity of ancient recollections—and it borrows dignity, moreover, from the wide and national character of the feelings which it embodies and expresses. Our Methodist divines, on the contrary, are saturated with a vulgar banquet, which has not one element of grandeur to redeem any portion of its vulgarity. The slavish wonderment with which they are gazed upon by the goggling eyes of their mechanical followers, is a very different sort of thing from the filial respect with which the Moncrieffs, Inglises, and Chalmerses of Scotland, are regarded by the devout descendants of the old establishers of Presbytery. So much for proem.

The first Presbyterian clergyman of Edinburgh, whom I went to hear, was the same Reverend Baronet of whose appearance in the General Assembly I have already spoken. In the pulpit, the appearance of this man is quite as commanding, and it is (under favour) far more amiable, than in the Ecclesiastical Court; and this is just as it should be. He has a pride, it would seem, in keeping up as much as the times will permit, not only of the animating spirit, but the external demeanour, of the old Presbyterian divines. They, you know, set their faces entirely against the notion of any superior sanctity being attached to the mere *locale* of any

place of worship, and in order to mark this notion in a tangible way, they introduced the custom of entering the church covered. Sir Henry adheres even to this somewhat rude practice, and I observed him with astonishment walking from his vestry through the church, and ascending the steps of his pulpit, with his hat on his head. It was not till he had fairly established himself in his seat, that he took off his hat, and hung it upon a peg immediately over him. I was surprised, and a little offended perhaps, by the apparent irreverence of this behaviour; but the service soon commenced, and my thoughts were speedily constrained to flow in a very different channel.

In his prayer, however, and even through a considerable part of his sermon, I must not deny that the impression of strength and acumen, conveyed by the style of the Baronet's eloquence, was still accompanied with some sense of coarseness, not much expected or relished in such a situation by my English ears. The novelty of such a way of preaching, notwithstanding, was sufficient to rivet effectually my attention, and the broad substratum of practical pith could not fail to shine brightly through the voluntary opakeness he scattered over his surface. But toward the end, when he had done with all his bitter and dogmatic reprobations of those who interpret differently from him the passage on which he enlarged, and made an end also of his own somewhat technical exposition of the Calvinistic minutiæ in point, and began fairly to press home upon his people the use which they ought to make, in their daily life and conversation, of the truths which he had been promulgating or establishing —it was then that all the harsher parts of his mind seemed to have been stilled into quiescence, and that all the lines of his masculine countenance seemed to thrill and vibrate with the genuine apostolic tenderness of a Christian minister. Nor when I looked up and saw those features which heretofore I had contemplated clothed in the rigid marble of unmixed austerity, dissolving now and trembling with the warm gushing inspirations of love and compassion—could I help feeling, that this is the true way in which the gentler and more delightful feelings of humanity ought to be made

to come in the train and attendance of the sterner behests of that law which is nothing unless it be severe.

What a different sort of effect has such a tender close as this, following after the bold and pealing alarums of an unsparing (even should it be a rude) honesty, from the puling and piping echos of eternal tenderness with which not a few of the popular sermon-makers of the day think fit to regale the effeminate ears of their admirers! How different from the eloquence of your white handkerchiefed whiners—your ring displaying, faultering, fawning, frothy weavers of pathetic periods—your soft, simpering saints, from whose mouths the religion of the Bible falls diluted and dulcified, like the meretricious moonlight burdens of an Irish melody! It is by the ministrations of these poor drawlers that the Christian faith is degraded in the eyes of men who are sharp enough to observe these superficial absurdities, but not wise enough to penetrate below their veil into its true and deep-placed majesty. It is, on the other hand, by the ministrations of such men as Sir Henry Moncrieff, that men are, or ought to be, inspired with an equal and a simultaneous reverence for the awful and the gentle notes that are ever mingled together in the true oracles of God.

I also heard Dr. Inglis preach; and the high idea I had formed of him, from his speaking in the Assembly, was certainly raised, rather than otherwise, by the style of his eloquence in the Pulpit. This preacher is far from exhibiting any thing of the same extreme attachment to the externals of the old Presbyterian Divines, which I had remarked in Sir Henry Moncrieff. He preaches, indeed, like a sound Calvinist; but in the arrangement of his subject, the choice of his illustrations, and the whole strain of his language, he is very little different from the best of our own High-Church preachers in England. I am sure, indeed, that (laying aside his northern accent, and some characteristic gestures which are quite as peculiar to the atmosphere of the north) Dr. Inglis might preach the sermon I heard in any Cathedral in England, and would, in so doing, not only impress his audience with great admiration of his talents, but carry

along with him, in the whole turn of his thoughts and sentiments, the perfect intelligence of their sympathies. And why, after all, should I state this as a circumstance any wise wonderful in regard to a man who is, as I have already told you, an accomplished scholar both in and out of his profession? The Scottish clergyman, who is an accomplished divine, must have become such only by having intensely studied and comprehended the great divines of England. With the language of these men, and the knowledge of these men, is it wonderful that he should also adopt their modes of thinking and of feeling? I think it were strange, indeed, if he should not do so.

Sir Henry Moncrieff officiates in a church which lies out of the town altogether, at the western side of the Castle; and Dr. Inglis in the Greyfriars Church, which is situated in an obscure part of the Old Town. But the most popular preacher of the time in Edinburgh occupies a new and magnificent place of worship in the finest square, and most fashionable neighbourhood, of the whole city. Mr. Andrew Thomson (for that is his name) is a much younger man than either of those I have described; and perhaps his talents are still better adapted than those of either, for producing a powerful impression on the minds of people living in what may be called, strictly speaking, *the Society of Edinburgh*. Nor, indeed, can any better proof of his eminent qualifications be required, than the effect which, unless I am quite misinformed, his preaching has already produced in the place of his ministrations. I am assured, that church-going was a thing comparatively out of fashion among the fine folks of the New-Town of Edinburgh, till this man was removed from a church he formerly held in the Old-Town, and established under the splendid dome of St. George's. Only two or three years have elapsed since this change took place; and yet although he was at first received with no inconsiderable coolness by the self-complacent gentry of his new parish,—and although he adopted nothing that ordinary people would have supposed likely to overcome this coolness, he has already entirely subdued all their prejudices, and enjoys at this moment a degree of favour among all classes of his auditors, such as—(to the shame of the world be it

spoken)—very seldom falls to the share of such a man in such a place.

His appearance is good; and this is less of a *trifle in* regard to such matters than he himself would perhaps be willing to allow. He is an active and muscular man, about forty, and carries in his countenance the stamp of a nature deficient in none of those elements which are *most efficacious* in giving a man command over the minds of persons placed under the continual operation of his intellect. Most of his features, indeed, are rather homely than otherwise in their conformation—but they are all well defined, massy, and full of power. His eyes are quick, and firmly set—his lips are bold, and nervous in their notions, no less than in their quiescence—his nose is well carved, and joins firmly with a forehead of unquestionably very fine and commanding structure, expanded broadly below in sinuses of most iron projection, and swelling above in a square compact form, which harmonizes well with a strong and curled texture of hair. His attitude has no great pretensions to grace, but it conveys the notion of inflexible vigour and decision. His voice sounds somewhat harshly at first, but as he goes on one feels that it possesses a large compass, and that he wields its energies with the mastery of a musician.

In his mode of preaching, he displays less play of fancy than Dr. Inglis; and he never rises into any such broad and over-mastering bursts of pure passion, as I admired in the conclusion of Sir Henry Moncrieff's sermon. But throughout, he sustains more skilfully than either, the tenour of his whole argument, and he mixes with it all throughout a thread of feeling, which is enough and more than enough to keep the interest alive and awake. But the chief origin of the power he has obtained, must be sought for, I doubt not, in the choice of his topics—the bold and unfearing manner in which he has dared to fix the attention of his audience, not upon matters best calculated to favour the display of his own ingenuity, or to flatter their vanity by calling upon them to be ingenious in their listening—but upon plain points of radical importance in doctrine and practice, of which, as treated by preachers less acquainted with the actual ways of

the world, it is probable most of them had become in a great measure weary, but which their own innate value and innate truth could not fail to render imperiously and decisively interesting, the moment they began to be handled by one possessed of the thorough manliness of *tact* and purpose, which Mr. Thomson cannot utter five sentences without displaying To talk, indeed, of exhausting the interest of any such topics by any method of treating them—would be an absurdity—and cannot be explained in any sense, without involving the severest of satires upon those to whom the discussion is addressed. But it is, after all, a very wonderful thing how seldom one does find a man carrying with him into the pulpit, the perfect knowledge of the world as it is—a complete acquaintance with all the evanescent manifestations of folly, existing, for the moment, in the thoughts and feelings of "the great vulgar and the small"—and it is no less wonderful, and far more pitiable to observe, with what readiness the cosmopolites of the day take up with the want of this sort of knowledge on the part of their clergyman, as a sufficient apology for slighting and neglecting the weight of his opinion in regard to matters, their own intense ignorance and non-comprehension of which is so much less excusable, or, I should rather say, is so entirely unaccountable and absurd. Till the fine gentlemen of the present day perceive that you understand all that they themselves do, their self-love will not permit them to give you credit for understanding any thing which they themselves do not understand—nay—not even for thinking that things are important, about the importance or non-importance of which they themselves have never had the fortune to occupy any portion of their surpassing acumen and discernment. In a word, in order to preach with effect to the people of the world, as they are educated now-a-days, it is necessary to show that you have gone through all their own little track—and then they may perhaps be persuaded that you have gone beyond it. Now, Mr. Andrew Thomson strikes me to be, without exception, one of the most complete masters of this world's knowledge I ever heard preach on either side of the Tweed; and therefore it is that he produces a most powerful effect, by showing himself to be

entirely and utterly its despiser. The person who hears his preach has none of the usual resources to which many are accustomed to retreat, when something is said from the pulpit that displeases their prejudices. They cannot pretend even to themselves, that this is a secluded enthusiast who knows no better, and would not talk so, had he seen a little more of life. It is clear, from the moment he touches upon life, that he has looked at it as narrowly as if that observation had been his ultimatum, not his mean; and the probability is, that instead of smiling at his ignorance, the hearer may rather find occasion to suspect that his knowledge surpasses his own.

Having command of this rare and potent engine, with which to humble and disarm that worldly self-love, which is among the most formidable enemies of a modern preacher's eloquence,—and employing it at all times with the most fearless and unhesitating freedom,—and following it up at all times by the boldest and most energetic appeals to the native workings of the heart, which may be chilled, but are seldom extinguished,—it is no wonder that this man should have succeeded in establishing for himself a firm and lasting sway over the minds of his apparently elegant and fashionable audience. It has never indeed been my fortune to see, in any other audience of the kind, so many of the plain manifestations of attentive and rational interest during divine service. As for the sighing and sobbing masters and misses which one meets with at such places as Rowland Hill's chapel, and now and then at an evening sermon in the Foundling, these are beings worked upon by quite a different set of engines—engines which a man of sagacious mind, and nervous temperament, like Mr. Thomson, would blush to employ. I rejoice in finding that Edinburgh possesses, in the heart of her society, the faithful ministrations of this masculine intellect; and it is a great additional reason for rejoicing, that by means, the effect of which could not have been calculated upon beforehand, these his faithful ministrations should have come to carry with them not only the tolerance, but the favour of those to whom they may do so much

good. It is very seldom that the stream of fashion is seen to flow in a channel so safe, and a direction so beneficial.

Of the other members of the Established Church of Edinburgh whom I have heard preach, one of those who made most impression on my mind was Dr. Thomas Macknight, son to the author of The Harmony of the Gospels, and Translation of the Epistles. I went chiefly from a desire to see the descendant of one of the few true theological writers Scotland has produced, and I found that the son inherits the learning of his father. Indeed, I have seldom heard more learning displayed in any sermon, and that, too, without at all diminishing the practical usefulness of its tendency. Another was Dr. Brunton, whom I confess I went to hear from a motive of somewhat the same kind—the wish, namely, to see the widowed husband of the authoress of Discipline, and the other novels of that striking series. He has a pale countenance, full of the expression of delicacy, and a melancholy sensibility, which is but too well accounted for by the grievous loss he has sustained. One sees that he is quite composed and resigned; but there is a settled sadness about his eyes which does equal honour to the departed and the survivor. In his sermon he displayed a great deal of elegant conception and elegant language; and altogether, under the circumstances which attended him, he seemed to me one of the most modestly impressive preachers I have ever heard.

* * * * *

* * * * *

P. M.

LETTER LXII.

TO THE SAME.

I believe, therefore, most entirely in the merits of the Kirk—I have no doubt it is as well fitted as any establish-

ment in Christendom could be, for promoting the cause of religion among the people of Scotland—nay, I may go farther, and say, that with the intellectual tendencies and habits of this people, it is now perhaps much the best they could have.

Presbytery, however, was not established in this country without a long and violent struggle, or series of *struggles*, in which it is too true, that the mere tyrannical *aversion of* the Stuart kings, was the main and most effectual enemy the Presbyterians had to contend with—but in which, notwithstanding, there was enlisted against the cause of that sect no inconsiderable nor weak array of fellow-citizens, conscientiously and devoutly adhering to an opposite system. It was a pity that the Scottish Episcopalians were almost universally Jacobites; for their adoption of that most hated of all heresies, made it a comparatively easy matter for their doctrinal enemies to scatter them entirely from the field before them. Nevertheless, in spite of all the *disfavour* and disgrace with which, for a length of years, they had to contend, the spirit of the Episcopalian Church did not evaporate or expire, and she has of late lifted up her head again in a style of splendour, that seems to awaken considerable feelings of jealousy and wrath in the bosoms of the more bigotted Presbyterians who contemplate it. The more liberal adherents of the Scottish Kirk, however, seem to entertain no such feelings, or, rather, they take a pleasure in doing full justice to the noble steadfastness which has been displayed through so long a period of neglect, and more than neglect, by their fellow Christians of this persuasion. To the clergy of the Episcopalian Church, in particular, they have no difficulty in conceding a full measure of that praise, which firm adherence to principle has at all times the power of commanding; and the adherence of these men has, indeed, been of the highest and most meritorious kind. With a self-denial and humility, worthy of the primitive ages of the church, they have submitted to all manner of penury and privation, rather than depart from their inherited faith, or leave the people of their sect without the support of that spiritual instruction, for which it was

out of their power to offer any thing more than a very trivial and inadequate kind of remuneration. Nay, in the midst of all their difficulties and distresses, they have endeavoured, with persevering zeal, to sustain the character of their own body in regard to learning—and they have succeeded in doing so in a way that reflects the highest honour not only on their zeal, but their talents. Not a few names of very considerable celebrity, in the past literature of Scotland, are to be found among the scattered and impoverished members of this Apostolical Church; and even in our own time, the talents of many men have been devoted to its service, who might easily have commanded what less heroic spirits would have thought a far more precious kind of reward, had they chosen to seek, in other pursuits and professions, what they well knew this could never afford them. In Edinburgh, two very handsome new chapels have of late years been erected by the Episcopalians, and the clergymen who officiate in them possess faculties eminently calculated for extending the reputation of their church. Dr. Sandford, the Bishop of the Diocese, preaches regularly in the one, and the minister of the other is no less a person than Mr. Alison, the celebrated author of the Essays on Taste, and of those exquisite Sermons which I have so often heard you speak of in terms of rapture—and which, indeed, no man can read, who has either taste or feeling, without admiration almost as great as your's.

The Bishop is a thin pale man, with an air and aspect full of a certain devout and melancholy sort of abstraction, and a voice which is very tremulous, yet deep in its tones, and managed so as to produce a very striking and impressive effect. In hearing him, after having listened for several Sundays to the more robust and energetic Presbyterians I have described, one feels as if the atmosphere had been changed around, and the breath of a milder, gentler inspiration, had suffused itself over every sound that vibrates through the stillness of a more placid æther. Nothing can be more touching than the paternal affection, with which it is plain this good man regards his flock; it every now and then gives a gushing richness of power to his naturally fee-

ble voice—and a no less beautiful richness to his usually chaste and modest style of language. There is a *quiet* elegance about his whole appearance, which I suspect *is* well nigh incompatible with the Geneva cloak of Calvin, and I should have judged, from his exterior alone, (which is indeed the truth,) that he is a man of much accomplishment and learning. He has the character here, and, as *W*—— says, at Oxford, where he was educated, also, of being at *once* a fine scholar and a deep divine. He preaches, however, in a very simple, unaffected, and pleasing manner—without any kind of display, beyond what the subject seems to render absolutely necessary.

Mr. Alison has a much larger chapel, and a more numerous congregation, and he possesses, no doubt, much more largely the qualifications of a popular orator. He has also about him a certain pensiveness of aspect, which I should almost suspect to have been inherited from the afflicted priests of this church of the preceding generation. He has a noble serenity of countenance, however, which is not disturbed, but improved, by its tinge of melancholy—large grey eyes, beaming with gentle lambent fire, and set dark and hollow in the head, like those which Rembrandt used to draw—lips full of delicacy and composure—and a tall pale forehead sprinkled loosely with a few thin, grey, monastic ringlets. His voice harmonizes perfectly with this exterior—clear—calm—mellow—like that far-off mournful melody with which the great poet of Italy has broken the repose of his autumnal evening,

> "..... Squilladi lontano
> Che paja il giorno pianger che si muore."

In spite of his accent, which has a good deal of his country in it, I have never heard any man read the service of our church in so fine and impressive a style as Mr. Alison. The grave antique majesty of those inimitable prayers, acquiring new beauty and sublimity as they passed through his lips, could not fail to refresh and elevate my mind, after it had been wearied with the loose and extemporaneous, and not unfrequently, as I thought, irreverent supplications of the

Presbyterian divines. In his preaching, the effect of his voice is no less striking; and, indeed, much as you have read and admired his Sermons, I am sure you would confess, after once hearing him, that they cannot produce their full effect, without the accompaniment of that delightful music. Hereafter, in reading them, I shall always have the memory of that music ringing faintly in my ears—and recall, with every grand and every gentle close, the image of that serene and solemn countenance, which Nature designed to be the best commentary on the meanings of Alison.

As to the peculiar views of the subjects of religion, which are most commonly presented by the Sermons of this elegant preacher—I need not say any thing on that head to one so much better acquainted with all his works than I can pretend to be. There is one point, however, in which I could not but remark a very great difference between him and all the other preachers I have ever heard in Scotland. He is the only man among them who seems to be alive, as he should be, to the meaning and power of the external world—and who draws the illustrations of his discourses from minute and poetical habits of observing Nature. A truly poetical air of gentleness is breathed over all that he says, proceeding, as it were, from the very heart of that benevolent *All*, which he has so delightedly and so intelligently surveyed. And, indeed, from what precious stores of thought, and feelings impregnated and enriched with thought, do they shut themselves out, who neglect this beautiful field, and address Christian auditors almost as if God had not given them eyes to drink in a sense of his greatness and his goodness, from every thing that is around them—who speaks to the rich as if there were nothing to soften, and to the poor as if there were nothing to elevate, in the contemplation of the glorious handiworks of God—as if it were in vain that Nature had prepared her magnificent consolation for all the sick hearts and weary spirits of the earth—

> "For you each evening hath its shining star,
> And every Sabbath-day its golden sun."

It is singular, I think, that the other distinguished preachers,

of whom I have spoken, should so needlessly debar themselves from all this rich range of sentiment and of true religion. Above all, in the Presbyterian di ines, I was not prepared to find such barrenness—having, I believe, too hastily interpreted in my own way, a certain beautiful passage in Wordsworth, when the ancient Scottish Wanderer, the same on whom

> "The Scottish Church had from his boyhood laid
> The strong arm of her purity"——

—where the Wanderer is made to speak of the style of thought prevalent among the old persecuted Covenanters, and says proudly,

> "Ye have turned my thoughts
> Upon our brave progenitors, who rose
> Against idolaters with warlike mind,
> And shrunk from vain observances, to lurk
> In caves and woods, and under dismal rocks,
> Deprived of shelter, covering, fire, and food;
> Why?—For the very reason that they felt
> And did acknowledge, wheresoe'er they moved,
> A spiritual Presence—oft times misconceived,
> But still a high dependence, a divine
> Bounty and government, that filled their hearts
> With joy and gratitude and fear and love:
> And from their fervent lips drew hymns of praise,
> With which the deserts rang—Though favoured less
> Were those bewildered Pagans of old time,
> Beyond their own poor nature, and above
> They looked; were humbly thankful for the good
> Which the warm sun solicited—and earth
> Bestowed: were gladsome—and their moral sense
> They fortified with reverence for the Gods:
> And they had hopes which overstepped the grave."

Of all the Sermons of Alison, those which I love the most, are the four on the Seasons; they are by far, in my mind, the most original and the most delightful he has ever produced. But something of the same amiable inspiration may be observed mingling itself in every discourse he utters. It is easy to see that his heart is penetrated, and it is no wonder

his tongue should overflow with the calm eloquence of Nature.

The church to which these preachers belong, is at present, as I have said, supposed to be in a more flourishing condition than heretofore—nay, unless W—— misinforms me, she numbers among her adherents a very large proportion of the landed gentry all over this part of the island. In the remoter districts, however, the Episcopalian clergy are said to be still labouring under a constraining weight of penury, which there does not seem to be any immediate prospect of relieving. In order to supply in some measure to their Pastors, the defects of the regular maintenances afforded by their small scattered flocks, a fund has been raised by subscription, the produce of which is annually applied, according to the best discretion of a committee of the most eminent members of the sect in Scotland. Of the subscriptions by which this fund is supported, a very large part is said to come from England. Nothing surely can be more laudable than the sympathizing zeal, which has led so many of the dignitaries of our church to come forward liberally in behalf of their less fortunate brethren in the North. But I think the Scottish Episcopalians ought to remember that independence was the old boast of their country, and insist upon providing for their own clergy entirely from their own funds. For the bishops of this church, however, from whatever quarter it may be derived, there is no question some more liberal provision should be made. It is a shame in those who profess to think, as good Episcopalians do, concerning the nature of the episcopal office, that they should permit excellent and learned bishops of their own church to be poorer, as is often the case, than the simple presbyters of the Established Kirk around them.

I have told you, that, in general, the Church of Scotland holds her ground more firmly against Dissenters than that of England—and yet there are abundance of Dissenters in Edinburgh, over and above the Episcopalians, who would perhaps object to be included under that name. There are Tabernaclites, and Haldanites, and Wesleyan Methodists, and other independents, of several different kinds, and a very few

Unitarians—and there are some Catholics—all these congregations, for the most part, consisting of persons in very humble ranks of society. But the most formidable enemies of the Kirk are those who have dissented from her on very trivial grounds, and are not, indeed, very easy to be distinguished from her in any way adapted to the comprehension of the uninitiated stranger. Such are the Burghers and Anti-Burghers, both of whom separated themselves from the Established Church, in consequence of their adopting different views, concerning the lawfulness of a certain oath required to be taken by the burgesses of a few towns in Scotland. The Anti-burghers are, I believe, the more numerous body of the two, and they again have fallen out among themselves, and so given rise to rival sects of *Old Light Anti-burghers* and *New Light Anti-burghers*. From what particular circumstances these most picturesque designations have been derived, I know not and care not, and I am sure your curiosity is as small as mine. It so happens, however, that both the Old Light and the New Light are in some considerable estimation at present in Edinburgh, by reason of the more than common talents and respectability of their respective pastors, both of whom, as it happens, are among the most distinguished Scottish literati of the day. The New Light Anti-burghers enjoy the ministrations of no less a person than Dr. M'Crie, the author of the Life of John Knox—and the natural obscurity of the sect accounts for what at the time I could by no means understand—the ignorance, namely, under which the Edinburgh Reviewers professed themselves to have been even of the existence of such a person as Dr. M'Crie, till the day his history was published. The Old Light, on the other hand, are ruled *in spiritualibus* by Dr. Jamieson, the author of the admirable Dictionary of the Scottish Language, and many other works illustrative of the ancient history and manners of his country. Notwithstanding the eminent abilities and learning possessed by both of these individuals, their labours have not, so far as I have understood, attracted any considerable addition to the adherents of their respective sects—but the authority of their names must, without doubt, be efficacious in preventing those who

have been educated in either of the *Lights*, from reverting to the darkness of the Established Kirk—to say nothing of the more than Cimmerian obscurity and "night palpable" of the Episcopalians.

And yet nothing surely can be more absurd, than that two such clergymen should be lending support to two such pitiable sets of schismatics. I can understand very well, that there are many cases in which it would be wrong to interpret too strictly the great Scriptural denunciations against the errors of schism—but I am, indeed, very sorely mistaken if such matters as the disputes upon which these New and Old Light-men have separated from the Kirk of Scotland, can by any possible logic be brought into the number of allowable exceptions to so great and important a rule. If any thing were wanting to make the cup of their absurdities overflow, it is the pettish and splenetic hatred which they seem to bear to each other—for I believe the New thinks the Auld Light devotee in a much worse condition than the adherent of the Kirk itself—and, of course, *vice versa*. Nay—such is the extreme of the folly—that these little Lilliputian controversies about burgess oaths, &c. have been carried into America by Scottish emigrants, and are at this moment disturbing the harmony of the Church of Christ in a country where no burgess oath ever existed, or, it is probable, ever will exist. Beyond the mere letter of their formal disputes, these Dissenters can have no excuse to offer for their dereliction of the Kirk. They cannot accuse her clergy of any want of zeal, worth, or learning. In short, their dissent is only to be accounted for by the extravagant vanity and self-importance of a few particular theorists—absurdly inherited and maintained by men whose talents, to say nothing of their piety, should have taught them to know better.*

* I have since heard that the Burghers and Anti-burghers are taking measures to form a coalition, and, willing, *bonâ fide*, to drop all remembrance of their feuds. This is excellent, and does honour to their respective leaders: I would hope it may prepare the way for the return of all these dissenters (who can scarcely be said to have even a pretence for dissent) to their allegiance to the Mother Kirk.

I went, however, to hear Dr. M'Crie preach, and was not disappointed in the expectations I had formed from a perusal of his book. He is a tall, slender man, with a pale face, full of shrewdness, and a pair of black piercing eyes—a shade of deep secluded melancholy passing ever and anon across their surface, and dimming their brilliancy. His voice, too, has a wild but very impressive kind of shrillness in it at times. He prays and preaches very much in the usual style of the Presbyterian divines—but about all that he says there is a certain unction of sincere, old-fashioned, haughty Puritanism, peculiar, so far as I have seen, to himself, and by no means displeasing in the historian of Knox. He speaks, too, with an air of authority, which his high talents render excusable, nay, proper—but which few could venture upon with equal success. I went on the same day to hear Dr. Jamieson, and found him also a sensible and learned preacher. He is a very sagacious-looking person, with bright grey eyes, and a full round face—the tones of his voice are kindly and smooth, and altogether he exhibits the very reverse of that anchoretic aspect and air which I had remarked in Dr. M'Crie. I could see that the congregations of both these men regard them with an intense degree of interest and affectionate humility—all which, to be sure, is extremely natural and proper. So much for the New and Auld Lights.

As I am so very soon to visit the West of Scotland, where I am assured the head-quarters of Presbyterianism are still to be found in the old haunts of the Covenanters, I shall defer any farther remarks I may have to make upon the state of religion in Scotland, till I have added the whole of that rich field to the domain of my observation.

P. M.

P. S. Many thanks for your hint about Old Potts. I fear I have been behaving very badly indeed—but shall endeavour to find time for scribbling a few pages suitable to his tastes, before I set off for Glasgow. As for the £500—I rather think you ought to fight shy—but, no doubt, you are as well up to that matter as I am. I shall advise Potts to

come down to the North, where, in good truth, I do think he would make a noble figure. There is no Dandy in Edinburgh worthy to hold the candle to our friend.

P. M.

LETTER LXIII.

TO FERDINAND AUGUSTUS POTTS, ESQ.

Clarendon Hotel, Bond-Street.

I WISH to God, my dear Potts, you would come down to Edinburgh, and let me engage apartments for you at the Royal Hotel. Are you never to extend your conquests beyond London or Cardigan? Are you to lavish your captivations for ever on Bond-street milliners and blowsy Welch-women? Why, my dear sir, your face must be as well known about St. James's as the sign of the White-Horse Cellar, and your tilbury and dun gelding as familiar to the cockneys as the Lord Mayor's coach. Even Stulze himself cannot possibly disguise you as formerly. Your surtouts, your upper Benjamins, your swallow-tails, your club-coats, your orange tawny Cossacks, are now displayed without the slightest effect. It matters not whether Blake gives you the cut of the Fox, the Bear, or the Lion, whether you sport moustaches or dock your whiskers, yours is an old face upon town, and, you may rely on it, it is well known to be so. Not a girl that raises her quizzing-glass to stare at you but exclaims, "Poor Potts! how altered he must be. I have heard mamma say, in her time, he was good-looking; who could have believed it?" Every young Dandy that enquires your name is answered with, "Don't you know Old Potts?" "Old Potts! why, that gentleman is not old." "No! bless your soul, he has been on town for the last twenty years." Yet let not all this mortify you, my dear fellow, for you *are not* old. Six-and-thirty is a very good age, and you are still a devilish good-looking fellow. What you want is a change of scene to extend your sphere of

action, to go where your face will be a new one; and, whenever you do so, you may rely on it you will never be called "Old Potts." Now, if you will take my advice, and decide on shifting your quarters, I know of no place that would suit you half so well as Edinburgh. Your tilbury and dun gelding (though they will stand no comparison with Scrub and the shandrydan) will cut a much greater dash in Prince's-street than in Hyde-Park; and your upper Benjamin and orange tawny Cossacks will render you a perfect Drawcansir among the ladies. As a Jehu, you will have no rivals in Scotland. A brace of heavy dragoons, to be sure, are occasionally to be seen parading in a crazy dog-cart, in the seat of which their broad bottoms appear to have been wedged with much dexterity, and a writer or two, particularly a Mr. ——, the *Lambert* of the Law, (weighing about twenty stone,) is sometimes to be met with in a lumbering buggy, moving at the rate of the Newcastle wagon, and drawn by a horse, whose tenuity of carcase forms a striking contrast to the rotund abdomen of his master. Scotland, to say the truth, has produced many painters, poets, heroes, and philosophers, but not a single *whip*. Indeed, since my arrival in Edinburgh, I have heard of a Scotsman having discovered the *perpetuum mobile*, but never of any one who could drive four spanking tits in real bang-up style. Your talents in that department will, therefore, cast them all into the shade; and I will venture to predict, that neither writer nor heavy dragoon will dare to show his nose in a buggy after your first appearance in the north.

I assure you, by coming down to Edinburgh you will add mightily to your importance. In London you are but a star (a star of the first magnitude, I admit,) in the mighty firmament of fashion. Twinkle as bright as you please, there are a thousand others who twinkle just as brightly. In short, you are, and can be, but one in a crowd, and I defy you to poke your head into a large party without encountering fifty others whose claims to distinction are quite as good as your own. But here you will be the sun in the splendid heaven of Bon-ton, the *patula fagus*, under whose spread-

ing branches the admiring and gentle Tityri of the north will be proud to recline:—

> Potts, like the Sun, in Fashion's heaven shall blaze,
> While minor planets but reflect his rays.

All this, my dear friend, I submit to your own good sense and deliberate consideration. In the meanwhile, I shall endeavour to enable you to judge with more precision of the advantages of my plan, by throwing together, for your information, a few short remarks on the state of Dandyism in the North.

The Dandies of Edinburgh possess a finer theatre whereon to display their attractions than those of any other city in the three kingdoms. You have nothing in London which, as a promenade, can be compared to Prince's-street. Bond-street is abominably narrow and crooked, and really contains nothing to gratify the eye but the living beauties who frequent it, and the gold snuff-boxes and India handkerchiefs which decorate the windows. St. James's-street is better, but it wants extent, and Dame-street in Dublin has the same fault. Oxford Road is perhaps less exceptionable than either; but it is unfashionable, and, at best, holds no greater attractions than can be afforded by an almost endless vista of respectable dwelling-houses and decent shops. But Prince's-street is a magnificent terrace, upwards of a mile in length, forming the boundary of a splendid amphitheatre, and affording to the promenading Dandy a view not only of artificial beauties, but also of some of the sublimest scenery of Nature. There, when the punch-bowl is empty, and "night's candles are burned out," he may stagger down the steps of the Albyn Club, and behold

> "Jocund day
> Stand tiptoe on the misty mountain's top,"

as the sun majestically raises his disk above the top of Arthur's Seat. There is something rural and grand in the prospect which it affords you. Not that sort of rurality (if I may coin a word) which Leigh Hunt enjoys at Hampstead, which

arises chiefly from the presence of green trees, and may therefore be equally enjoyed in the Champs Elisées or Vauxhall; but those feelings of rural grandeur which we derive from gazing on the loftiest objects of Nature. From the crowded city we behold the undisturbed dwellings of the hare and the heath-fowl—from amidst the busy hum of men we look on recesses where the sound of the human voice has but rarely penetrated, on mountains surrounding a great metropolis, but which rear their mighty heads in solitude and silence. What pleases me more in this scenery is, that it is so perfectly characteristic of the country, so truly Scottish. Transport Arthur's Seat to Paris, and the Champs Elisées to Edinburgh, and you disfigure both capitals, because the beauties you transpose are not in harmony or *keeping* with the rest of the picture. No man in Edinburgh can for a moment forget that he is in Scotland. He is in "the land of the mountain and flood," and these, in their greatest beauty, are continually feeding his eyes. But I am treating you like a landlord, who, intending to give his guests an earnest of the good cheer he has provided for them, regales them with the prospect of the spit, but casts a veil over the only thing they care about, viz. the leg of mutton.

I am not quite certain that Scotland can produce a single specimen of the genuine Dandy. In fact, the term here appears to me to be both imperfectly understood and very grievously misapplied. Were I to divine the meaning of the word from the qualities of those persons whom it is here used to designate, I should conceive a Dandy to be nothing more than a gentleman in a white great-coat and a starched cravat, or, in the most liberal extension of its meaning, a person who is rather gay and foppish in his dress. But a Dandy is something more, nay, a great deal more, than all this. I should define him, in few words, to be a person who has acquired such a degree of refinement in all matters of taste as is unattainable, or at least unattained, by the generality of his countrymen. Dress, therefore, does not constitute Dandyism; because dress is only one of the many modes in which this fastidious refinement is displayed. A true Dandy decorates his person far less with the view of

captivation, than from the abstract love of elegance and beauty, in which he delights. His extraordinary attention to his toilet is, therefore, quite compatible with the utter absence of personal vanity, and the same ruling principle is uniformly visible in his habits, his manners, and his enjoyments. Nothing, therefore, is more easy than to distinguish the real Dandy from the impostor. The latter never can maintain the same consistency of character which is inseparable from the former. For instance, if, in Old Slaughter's Coffee-house, I discover a gaudy coxcomb complacently devouring a tough beef-steak, and extracting the lining of a pot of porter, I know at once, from the coarseness and vulgarity of his appetite, that he has no real pretensions to the character of a Dandy. In this country, when I find the very Arbitri Elegantiarum, the Dilletanti Society, holding their meetings in a tavern in one of the filthiest closes of the city, braving, with heroic courage, the risk of an impure baptism from the neighbouring windows, at their entrance and their exit, and drinking the memory of Michael Angelo, or Raphael, or Phidias, or Milton, in libations of whisky-punch, I cannot but consider that the coarseness of their habits and propensities appears utterly inconsistent with that delicacy of taste in other matters to which they make pretension. But that I may not carry my system of exclusion too far, I am inclined to divide the Dandies into two classes—the real, and the imitative. The former being those who really accord with the definition I have already given, and the latter merely a set of contemptible spooneys, who endeavour to attract attention by copying peculiarities which they really do not possess. I have already hinted that the Dandies of the North are chiefly of the imitative description. They want that boldness of character, and strength of outline, which distinguish their more accomplished prototypes in the South. They have none of that redeeming elegance—that visible consciousness of superior bon-ton—that calm and non-chalant assurance of manner—that complacent look of contemptuous self-approbation, which almost succeeds in disarming ridicule, by showing that on such a subject ridicule would be exerted in vain. There are no

Scottish Petershams, no Brummells, no Skeffingtons, no Cottons, no Nugents, no Churchills, no Cooks, no M'Kinnons, no Websters, no Foxes, and what is more, no Pottses. One reason for this striking inferiority certainly is, that this metropolis is only the casual and transient resort of the aristocracy of the country. Very few, indeed, of the nobility make Edinburgh their permanent residence; and those are scarcely sufficient to leaven the great mass of society in which they are mingled. By far the greater proportion, therefore—indeed I may say the whole of the young men of this city, belong to a profession.—They are lawyers, attornies, merchants, soldiers, sailors, and India nabobs. Now, I need not tell you, my dear Potts, how utterly ridiculous it is, in most of these men, to set up in the character of Dandies. What do you think of a Dandy in a three-tailed wig? Of a Dandy making out a mittimus, and writing papers for the princely remuneration of three pence a page? Of a Dandy who has been accustomed to reef top-sails, and swallow salt junk in a cockpit? Of a Dandy who sells sugar, and speculates in shag-tobacco? Or of a Dandy who has all his life been drilling black men, or growing indigo in the burning plains of Hindostan? It is such people, my dear Potts, whom I wish you to come hither to eclipse. It is over such loving and obedient subjects (as I am sure you will find them) that I desire you to reign. From a simple centumvir I would raise you to be king. They have the capacity to admire, without the power of rivalling you; and, as Ingleby is acknowledged the Emperor of all Conjurors, so will Potts be instantaneously hailed as the Great Mogul of all the Dandies of Scotland.

Fashion does not travel, like Fame, on the wind; and I have often remarked, with wonder, the prodigious length of time which she requires to perform even a journey of four hundred miles. The London newspapers arrive here in three days; but the London fashions are generally a couple of years on the road. For instance, white great-coats, which were utterly exploded three seasons ago in London, are now in full bloom in Edinburgh, and are reckoned quite the go. The hats, coats, and inexpressibles, which now greet my

eyes, are all equally antique in point of fashion; and I remember, in 1817, that the beaux of Cheapside were distinguished by much the same cut and colour of dress as that which I now observe from my windows on those frequenting the well-known shop of that accurate reasoner *a posteriori*, Christie the breeches-maker. There are, it is true, in this city, some agents or emissaries of London tailors, who receive orders to procure supplies of town-made habiliments for such gentlemen as are dissatisfied with the taste and skill of their indigenous Schneiders: but either these houses are not of the first water in their profession, or they presume considerably on the ignorance of their customers; for I really never could perceive much superiority in the articles thus imported, over the native productions of the country. But it were well if want of fashion were the only objection that could be made to the costume of the Scottish Dandies. There apparently exists, among some of them, a total want of taste, and ignorance of propriety in dress. Folks in this country may be seen writing law-papers in leather-breeches and jockey-boots, parading Prince's Street in shooting-jackets and long gaiters, and riding on horseback in nankeen trowsers and double-channelled pumps. Now, nobody can appreciate better than you the gross errors of which these people are guilty;—nobody can show them better a specimen of that true taste in dress, which confers even a grace upon foppishness, by never suffering it to deviate from the nicest propriety. There is a rule of fitness which you must teach these Scottish satellites of yours never to profane. Let them know that a man should dress differently when he intends to ride a fox-chace, or to walk the streets;—that he need not put on his sporting paraphernalia when he means merely to hunt for precedents in the Dictionary of Decisions;—that there is something absurd in eating ice enveloped in an upper Benjamin, and vulgar in going to the dress-boxes of the theatre in a morning surtout and coloured cravat. In short, you will have much to teach, and they much to learn; but as I am sure this will be a mutual pleasure to you both, I need say no more on the subject.

At routs and balls, your appearance will form no less remarkable an era than on the *pavé* of Prince's Street. In you the belles of Edinburgh will at once recognise a being of a superior order, whose slightest attentions cannot but confer honour on all to whom they are paid. If you want an heiress in a snug small way, there are abundance of little misses who will jump at your knowing exterior with an alacrity most pregnant of dismay to the discarded would-be Dandies, on whom their encouraging smiles are at present lavished, only because there is no opportunity of bestowing them more wisely. At the clubs, you will be hailed and greeted with a warmth which, in spite of its vulgarity, must be in some measure gratifying to your vanity. You need only, in a word, utter your *fiat*, and take possession of the Dandy sovereignty of the North by a single coup-de-main. Come down, my dear Potts—and yet why should I say so? —for I fear, were you once established in the sweets of Autocracy, there would be little chance of winning from you even a casual visit to your old friends in the South.

I am much to blame for not having sooner redeemed my promise of writing to you; but I had made an earlier and more serious promise of the same kind to our cousin David Williams, and my correspondence with him has been as much as I could well manage. I have besides been obliged; for obvious reasons, to address a few epistles to Lady Johnes; and, in short, I propose keeping the cream of my observations to amuse you next Christmas, when we meet, as our use is, at the hospitable mansion of your uncle. I am just about to leave Edinburgh for the present—so that, if I find time to write again, I shall probably address you from Glasgow, or some of the other provincial seats of Dandyism.

Meantime, believe me, my dear Potts,

Most sincerely yours,

P. M.

LETTER LXIV.

TO THE REV. DAVID WILLIAMS.

YESTERDAY was one of the happiest days I have spent since my present travels began; and although I had almost made up my mind to trouble you with no more letters of a merely descriptive character, I think I must venture upon giving you some account of it. Part of it, however, was spent in the company of several individuals whom I had for some weeks felt a considerable curiosity to see a little more of—whom, indeed, my friend W—— had long ago promised to introduce more fully to my acquaintance, and of whom, moreover, I am sure you will be very glad to hear me say a few words. But I shall be contented with giving you a narrative of the whole day's proceedings just as they passed.

Mr. W—— and I were invited to dine with a Mr. G——, to whom I had been introduced by a letter from my old and excellent friend Sir E—— B——, and whose name you have often seen mentioned in Sir E——'s writings. His residence, at the distance of some six or seven miles from Edinburgh had hitherto prevented me from being much in his society; but I was resolved to set apart one day for visiting him at his villa, and W—— was easily persuaded to accompany me. The villa is situated on the banks of the Eske, in the midst of some of the most classical scenery in all Scotland, so we determined to start early in the day, and spend the morning in viewing the whole of that beautiful glen, arranging matters so as to arrive at Mr. G——'s in good time for dinner. Knowing that the Ettrick Shepherd is a dear and intimate friend of Mr. G——'s, I asked him to take the spare seat in the shandrydan, and promised to bring him safe home in the evening in the same vehicle. The Shepherd consented. Mr. W—— gave us a capital breakfast in the Lawnmarket, and the shandrydan was in full career for Roslyn Castle by ten o'clock. Horse and man, the whole party were in high spirits; but the gayest of the whole wa the worthy Shepherd, who made his appearance on this oc-

casion in a most picturesque fishing jacket, of the very lightest mazarine blue, with huge mother of pearl buttons,—nankeen breeches, made tight to his nervous shapes,—and a broad-brimmed white chip hat, with a fine new ribbon to it, and a peacock's feather stuck in front; which last ornament, by the way, seems to be a favourite fashion among all the country people of Scotland.

The weather was very fine, but such, notwithstanding, as to give to the scenery through which our path lay, a grand, rather than a gay appearance. There had been some thunder in the morning, and rain enough to lay the dust on the road, and refresh the verdure of the trees; and although the sun had shone forth in splendour, the sky still retained, all along the verge of the horizon, a certain sombre and lowering aspect, the relics of the convulsions which the whole atmosphere had undergone. I know not if you have remarked it, but Gasper Poussin, Turner, Calcott, and Schetky, and almost all the great landscape painters seem to have done so—that this is precisely the situation of the heavens under which both foreground and distance are seen to the greatest effect. The dark inky mantle wrapped all round the circling mountains and plains, afforded a majestic relief to every tree, spire, and cottage which arose before us; and when we turned round, after proceeding a mile or two, and saw the glorious radiant outlines of Edinburgh, rock and tower, painted bright upon the same massy canopy of blue, it was impossible not to feel a solemn exultation in contemplating the harmonious blending together of so many earthly and etherial splendours. The newly shaken air, too, had a certain elasticity and coolness about it, which sent delightful life into our bosoms with every respiration. There was no rioting of spirits, but we enjoyed a rich quiet, contemplative, and reposing kind of happiness.

The country rather ascends than descends, all the way from Edinburgh to the line of the Eske, where a single turn shuts from the traveller the whole of that extensive stretch of scenery of which the capital forms the centre, and brings him at once into the heart of this narrow, secluded and romantic valley. At the edge of the ravine we found Mr.

G——, and some of his friends whom he had brought with him from his house to join us. Among others, Mr. W——n, his brother, an uncle of theirs, Mr. S——, a fine active elderly gentleman, in whose lineaments and manners I could easily trace all the fire of the line, and an old friend of his, Mr. M——, collector of the customs at Leith, a charming fellow. In company with these, we immediately began to walk down the hill toward Roslyn, directing the shandrydan to be carried round to Mr. G——'s house by the high-way, for the scenes we were about to explore do not admit of being visited except by pedestrians. Before we came to the Castle, we turned off into a field surrounded by a close embowering grove of venerable elms and chestnuts, to see that beautiful little chapel which Mr. Scott has so often introduced in his earlier poems. It stands quite by itself deserted, and lonely; but it is wonderfully entire, and really an exquisite specimen of architecture. Within, the roof and walls are quite covered with endless decorations of sculpture, leaves, and flowers, and heads and groups, not indeed executed in the pure and elegant taste of Melrose, but productive, nevertheless, of a very rich and fanciful kind of effect. The eastern end, toward the site of the altar, is supported by a cluster of pillars quite irregular in their shapes and position; some of them wreathed all over, from base to capital with arabesque ornaments, others quite plain, but the whole suffused with one soft harmonising tinge of green and mossy dampness. Under foot, the stones on which you tread are covered with dim traces of warlike forms—mailed chieftains, with their hands closed in prayer, and dogs and lions couchant at their feet, in the true old sepulchral style of heraldry. It is said that below each of these stones the warrior whom it represents lies interred in panoply,—

> "There are twenty of Roslin's barons bold,
> Lie buried within that proud chapelle,"—

while, all around, the lower parts of the wall are covered with more modern monuments of the descendants of the same high lineage—the cross ingrailed of St. Clair, and the galleys of Orkney, being every where discernible among their rich

and varied quarterings. From behind the altar, you step upon the firm stone roof of the sacristy, which projects from below, and it was from thence that I enjoyed the first full view of the whole glen of Roslyn.

The river winds far below over a bed of rock; and such is the nature of its course and its banks, that you never see more than a few broken and far-off glimpses of its clear waters at the same time. On the side on which we stood, the banks consist of green and woody knolls, whose inextricable richness and pomp of verdure is carried down, deepening as it descends, quite to the channel of the stream. Opposite, there shoots up a majestic screen of hoary rocks, ledge rising square and massy upon ledge, from the river to the horizon—but all and every where diversified with fantastic knots of copsewood, projecting and clinging from the minutest crannies of the cliffs. Far as the eye can reach down the course of the stream, this magnificent contrast of groves and rocks is continued—mingling, however, as they recede from the eye, into one dim magnificent amphitheatre,. over which the same presiding spirit of soothing loneliness seems to hover like a garment. The Castle itself is entirely ruined, but its yellow mouldering walls form a fine relief to the eye, in the midst of the dark foliage of pines and oaks which every where surround it. We passed over its airy bridge, and through its desolate portal, and descending on the other side, soon found ourselves treading upon the mossy turf around the roots of the cliff on which it stands, and within a few yards of the river. From thence we pursued our walk in pairs—sometimes springing from stone to stone, along the bed of the stream—sometimes forcing ourselves through the thickets, which drop into its margin—but ever and anon reposing ourselves on some open slope, and gazing with new delight from every new point of view, on the eternal, ever varying grandeur of the rocks, woods, and sky.

My close companion all along was the excellent Shepherd; and I could not have had a better guide in all the mazes of this Tempe, for often, very often had he followed his fancies over every part of it—

"——which well he knew; for it had been his lot
To be a wandering stripplíng—and there raves
No torrent in these glens, whose icy flood
Hath not been sprinkled round his boyish blood.

"And in that region shelter is there none
Of overhanging rock or hermit tree,
Wherein he hath not oft essayed to shun
The fierce and fervid day-star's tyranny."*

The whole party, however, were congregated where the river washes the base of the caverned rocks of Hawthornden—the most beautiful in itself, and, in regard to recollections, the most classical point of the whole scenery of the Eske. The glen is very narrow here—even more so than at Roslyn, and the rocks on the right rise to a still more magnificent elevation. Such, indeed, is the abruptness of their sheer ascent, that it is with some difficulty the eye can detect, from the brink of the stream, the picturesque outlines of the house of Hawthornden, situated on the summit of the highest crag. The old castle in which Drummond received Ben Jonson, has long since given way; but the more modern mansion is built within the dilapidated circuit of the ancient fortress—and the land is still possessed, and the hall occupied by the lineal descendants of the poet. I know not that there is any spot in Britain made classical by the footsteps of such a person as Drummond, one's notions respecting which are thus cherished and freshened by finding it in the hands of his own posterity, bearing his own name. We clombe the steep banks by some narrow paths cut in the rock, and entered at various points that labyrinth of winding caves, by which the interior of the rock is throughout perforated, and from which part of the name of the place has, no doubt, been derived. Nothing can be more picturesque than the echoing loneliness of these retreats—retreats which often afforded shelter to the suffering patriots of Scotland, long after they had been sanctified by the footsteps of the poet and his friend. Mr. G—— carried me into the house, chiefly to show me the original portrait of

* Stanihurst.

Drummond, which is preserved there; and, in truth, I am obliged to him for having done so. The picture represents him at about the age of forty—the best of all ages, perhaps, for taking a man's portrait, if only one is to be taken of him—when the substance of the face is in all its firmness and vigour, and the fire of youth has been tempered, but not obscured, by the gravity of manhood. Drummond's features are singularly fine and expressive—and the picture is an admirable one, and in perfect preservation, so that we see them exactly as they were the day they were painted. His forehead is clear, open, and compact, with the short black hair combed back in dark glossy ringlets, in the true Italian style—as we see it in the pictures of Venetian Nobles, by Titian. The nose is high and aquiline, and the lips rich and full, like those in the statues of Antinous. His eyes are black as jet, (and so are his eye-brows,) but the dazzle of their brilliancy is softened by a melancholy wateriness, which gives to the whole visage an inexpressible air of pensive delicacy and sentiment. On the whole, I have seldom seen a more lyrical countenance—or one which presents a more striking contrast to the dry, intellectual, sarcastic harshness of the lineaments of Ben Jonson—a portrait of whom also hangs in the same room.

> "Nature had framed them both, and both were marked
> By circumstance with intermixture fine
> Of contrast and resemblance. To an oak
> Hardy and firm, a weather-beaten oak,
> One might be likened. . . . . .
> The other, like a stately sycamore,
> That spreads in gentler pomp its honied shade."

It is wonderful, however, when one looks back into history, how many instances of the most sincere, fervent, and brotherly friendships, we see subsisting between men of apparently the mort opposite characters and conformations. It would not do if the intellectual consorted only with the intectual—the sentimental with the sentimental. The same wise regulation which binds the weakness of woman to the strength of man, unites, not unfrequently, the more gentle and amiable class of men in intimate and relying friendship

with others of austerer and harsher disposition; and the effects of such union have been most blessed, not only to the men themselves, but to their species. Such was the tender friendship that subsisted between the proud, hot, imperious Martin Luther, and the mild, holy spirit of Melancthon. Such was the humanizing affection which connected Chillingworth with Hales; and such, I doubt not, was the love which sweetened the flow of wit on the one hand, and elevated the tone of feeling on the other,

"When Jonson sate in Drummond's social shade."

Old Ben, however, is not the only English poet who has visited a Scottish poet in the glen of the Eske. It was while wandering among these very scenes that Mr. Wordsworth composed his fine Sonnet* to Mr. G——, a sonnet which, I think, Mr. G—— should attend to more seriously than he has yet done. The testimony of Wordsworth is a thing on which he should place far more reliance than on the wavering and desponding fancies of his own too-sensitive and morbid mind. It is impossible to be in his company for such a length of time as I was, on this delightful day, and in the midst of such scenes, without being satisfied that he possesses many of the finest elements of poetical feeling.

* The sonnet is as follows:

From the dark chambers of dejection freed,
Spurning the unprofitable yoke of care,
Rise, Gillies, rise: the gales of youth shall bear
Thy genius forward like a winged steed.
Though bold Bellerophon (so Jove decreed
In wrath) fell headlong from the fields of air,
Yet a high guerdon waits on minds that dare,
If aught be in them of immortal seed,
And reason govern that audacious flight
Which heavenward they direct. Then droop not thou,
Erroneously renewing a sad vow
In the low dell 'mid Roslin's fading grove:
A cheerful life is what the Muses love,
A soaring spirit is their prime delight.

The labour of condensing and correcting our thoughts and expressions, which, I suppose, is what Mr. G——'s poetry chiefly wants, is, no doubt, a great labour; but it is one, without which nothing can be done, and, therefore, Mr. G—— should submit to it.

We did not arrive at Mr. G——'s villa till about five o'clock, for in walking, loitering, and bathing, we had consumed the whole morning—so that we were well prepared to do justice to our dinner—but, indeed, the dinner might have been enough to tempt appetites more indifferently quickened. What a luxury a good dinner and a bottle of good wine is after a long walk! It always struck me as being a very silly thing in Mahomet, to represent his Paradise as being one unvaried scene of green silk sofas and sparkling goblets. The Northern mythologists, who imagined the Valhalla, have shown far more knowledge of nature and truth, when they make the heroes of Odin to spend all their mornings in blood and dust, cutting, and slashing, and careering at each other as they had been used to do, till, at the setting of sun, all their wounds are closed at once by magical power, they are bathed, and dressed in soft raiment, and all sit down together to enjoy themselves over a friendly board —as we did now. This is the true way in which life should be made to pass sweetly in this fine time of the year.

At dinner we found a large addition to our party—ladies and gentlemen, some residing for the time under the roof of Mr. G——, others who had come out from Edinburgh the same morning like ourselves. There was no want of wit—how much of it might be owing to our host's excellent champagne, I shall not pretend to guess. So far, indeed, it appeared to me Mr. G—— had followed his friend, the great Laker's advice—for nobody ever lived a more "cheerful life" than he seemed to do, while the tall black bottles chased each other with persevering unrelenting speed around his table. The effect of the champagne on the Ettrick Shepherd, in particular, was quite delightful: Accustomed, for the most part, to the ruder stimulus of whisky-toddy, this ethereal inspiration seemed to shoot life with subtler energy through a

thousand less explored meanderings of his body and his brain. Among other good things he contributed to our amusement, music was one. Before the ladies left the dining-room, he insisted upon having a violin put into his hands, and really produced a measure of sweet sounds, quite beyond what I should have expected from the workmanship of such horny fingers. It seems, however, he had long been accustomed to minister in this way at the fairs and penny-weddings in Ettrick, and we on the present occasion were well content to be no more fastidious than the Shepherd's old rustic admirers. He appears to be in very great favour among the ladies—and I thought some of the younger and more courtly poets in the company exhibited some symptoms of envying him a little of his copious complement of smiles—and well they might.

We had a great deal of conversation, however, on sober matters of literature and criticism, intermingled with our mirth and the joyous notes of the Shepherd's fiddle. Among other topics, the attacks on the Edinburgh Review in the Edinburgh Magazine, of which I have already spoken to you, were tabled, and a good many remarks were made on them by various persons in the company, among others, your humble servant. I was particularly free in my observations, being aware that a number of the young persons present wrote occasionally in the new Journal, and anxious, from friendly motives, to give them the benefit of a little advice from an unprejudiced and impartial stranger. I gave praise to some particular productions, and censure to others, in the hopes of detecting the authors, in case they should be present, from the variation of their faces; but, of a surety, either the public reports are quite erroneous, or these young gentlemen are masters of more *face* than I ever met with before in persons of double their years.

It was on this occasion that I had an opportunity of seeing and conversing with Mr. L——, who, as well as Mr. W——n, is supposed to be one of the principal supporters of this Magazine, and so of judging for myself concerning an individual who seems to have cared very little how many enemies he raised up among those who were not personally

acquainted with him. Owing to the satirical vein of some of the writings ascribed to his pen, most persons whom I have heard speak of him, seemed to have been impressed with the notion that the bias of his character inclined toward an unrelenting subversion of the pretensions of others. But I soon perceived that here was another instance of the incompetency of the crowd to form any rational opinion about persons of whom they see only partial glimpses, and hear only distorted representations. I was not long in his company ere I was convinced that those elements which form the basis of his mind could never find their satisfaction in mere satire, and that if the exercise of penetration had afforded no higher pleasure, nor led to any more desirable result than that of detecting error, or exposing absurdity, there is no person who would sooner have felt an inclination to abandon it in despondency and disgust. At the same time, a strong and ever-wakeful perception of the ludicrous, is certainly a prominent feature in his composition, and his flow of animal spirits enables him to enjoy it keenly, and invent it with success. I have seen, however, very few persons whose minds are so much alive and awake throughout every corner, and who are so much in the habit of trying and judging every thing by the united tact of so many qualities and feelings all at once. But one meets with abundance of individuals every day, who show in conversation a greater facility of expression, and a more constant activity of speculative acuteness. I never saw Mr. L—— very much engrossed with the desire of finding language to convey any relation of ideas that had occurred to him, or so enthusiastically engaged in tracing its consequences, as to forget every thing else. In regard to facility of expression, I do not know whether the study of languages, which is a favourite one with him—(indeed I am told he understands a good deal of almost all the modern languages, and is well skilled in the ancient ones)—I know not whether this study has any tendency to increase such facility, although there is no question it must help to improve the mind in many important particulars, by varying our modes of perception.

His features are regular, and quite definite in their out-

lines; his forehead is well advanced, and largest, I think, in the region of observation and perception; but the general expression is rather pensive than otherwise. Although an Oxonian, and early imbued with an admiration for the works of the Stagyrite, he seems rather to incline, in philosophy, to the high Platonic side of the question, and to lay a great deal of stress on the investigation and cultivation of the impersonal sentiments of the human mind—ideas which his acquaintance with German literature and philosophy has probably much contributed to strengthen. Under the influence of that mode of thinking, a turn for pleasantry rather inclines to exercise itself in a light and good-humoured play of fancy, upon the incongruities and absurd relations which are so continually presenting themselves in the external aspect of the world, than to gratify a sardonic bitterness in exulting over them, or to nourish a sour and atrabilious spirit in regarding them with a cherished and pampered feeling of delighted disapprobation, like that of Swift. But Mr. L—— is a very young person, and I would hope may soon find that there are much better things in literature than satire, let it be as good humoured as you will. Indeed, W—— tells me he already professes himself heartily sick of it, and has begun to write, of late, in a quite opposite key.

It was here, too, that I first became acquainted with another young gentleman, whose writings in the same Magazine had, in a particular manner, interested and delighted me; and which, indeed, could not possibly excite any feelings but those of the purest delight, in the mind of any person capable of understanding them. This is a Mr. W. H——; but the greater part of the company seemed to address him familiarly by the name of *Monsieur de Peudemots*, which *nom de guerre* was prefixed by him two or three years ago to an exquisite little separate publication of Tales and Essays, or, as he called them, "Fragments and Fictions." I have already sent off this little book to Lady Johnes, and I beg you to get it from her and read it with all speed. It is, perhaps, the most perfect bijou our time and country has produced.—It appears to me to bear to the prose of our day pretty much the same relation the poetry of Rogers does to

our popular poetry. It displays a profound elegance of thought and language—a pure, playful, inoffensive wit—and a most thrilling and poetic tenderness of feeling, such as have very rarely been united in any work of any country, and such as I run no risk in saying were never before displayed in union in the work of a man not much above twenty years of age.

Since his little book was published, however, M. de Peudemots (to judge from the writings, which the inimitable purity of style shows very plainly to be his,) has not a little enlarged his views in regard to men, and manners, and philosophy—and, I doubt not, he will soon show this enlargement in some very splendid way. By what process of circumstances such a mind as his is, should have been formed and nurtured into its present condition, in the midst of the superficial talkers and debaters of Edinburgh, I am greatly at a loss to imagine. It must, indeed, have been a very noble armour of innate strength, which has enabled him to resist so much of precept and example—and, in spite of all that was passing around him, to train himself, from his earliest years, in so sure a reliance upon the finer examples and higher precepts of the old times of England. It is easy to see much of his inward strength beaming through the modesty of his physiognomy—and in his organization upwards, it is still more easy to detect the marks of a commanding intellect. He has a high pale forehead, the pure intellectual conformation of which is sufficient to render it perfectly beautiful. So much for one whose name will not long be an obscure one.

I was introduced also to a third of these youthful coadjutors, in the person of a Captain H——, a very fine-looking young officer, whom the peace has left at liberty to amuse himself in a more pleasant way than he was accustomed to, so long as Lord Wellington kept the field. He has a noble Spaniard-looking head, and a tall, graceful person, which he swings about in a style of knowingness that might pass muster even in the eye of Old Potts. The expression of his features is so very sombre, that I should never have guessed him to be a playful writer, (indeed, how should I have guessed such a person to be a writer at all?)—Yet such

is the case—for, unless I am totally misinformed, he is the author of a thousand beautiful jeux d'esprit, both in prose and verse, which I shall point out to you more particularly when we meet.

In the conversation of this large party, and over the prime Chateau Margout of Mr. G——, the time past most agreeably till ten o'clock, at which hour we transferred ourselves to the drawing-room, and began dancing reels in a most clamorous and joyous manner, to the music, sometimes of the Shepherd's fiddle—sometimes of the harpsichord. On these latter occasions, the Shepherd himself mingled in the maze with the best of us, and, indeed, displayed no insignificant remains of that light-heeled vigour, which enabled him in his youth (ere yet he had found nobler means of distinction,) to bear the bell on all occasions from the runners and leapers of Ettrick-dale. The great beauty of this man's deportment, to my mind, lies in the unaffected simplicity with which he retains, in many respects, the external manners and appearance of his original station—blending all, however, with a softness and manly courtesy, derived, perhaps, in the main, rather from the natural delicacy of his mind and temperament, than from the influence of any thing he has learned by mixing more largely in the world. He is truly a most interesting person—his conversation is quite picturesque and characteristic, both in its subjects and its expression—his good-humour is unalterable, and his discernment most acute—and he bears himself with a happy mixture of modesty and confidence, such as well becomes a man of genius, who has been born and bred in poverty, and who is still far from being rich, but who has forfeited, at no moment of his career, his claim to the noble consciousness of perfect independence.

A merry supper, followed by a variety of songs and stories, detained us at Lasswade till a late, or rather till an early hour; but the moon had arisen in all her brightness, and our drive to Edinburgh was a cooling and calm termination to all the hilarities of the evening.

This morning I spent almost entirely in driving from one house to another, bidding adieu, for a few months, to such

of my Edinburgh friends as are still in town. This would, indeed, have been a sad duty, but for the prospect of meeting them all again after my return from the ulterior part of my pilgrimage. In the mean time, however, it is a real sorrow for me to part, even with that consolation in view, for so long a time from my excellent old friend, Mr. W——. His kindness has really been such as I can never repay—not even in gratitude. Ever since I came, he seems to have made me, my comfort, and convenience, and gratification, the sole subject of his concern. I trust I shall be able to induce him to give me, so far, my revenge, next summer, in Cardigan—but, alas! what can I show him there like much of what he has shown me in Edinburgh?

My time, however, presses, and I cannot possibly delay setting off for Glasgow any longer. I propose spending a week in and about that city, to several of the most respectable inhabitants of which I have received letters of introduction, through the kindness of my indefatigable friend. To-day W—— dines with me, once more *solus cum solo*, at my hotel—and with to-morrow's dawn I must gird myself for my journey. I shall write to you shortly after my arrival; but, in the mean time, in case you should write to me, address your letters to the Buck's-Head Hotel, Glasgow.

Ever your's,

P. M.

P. S. Don't forget to borrow M. de Peudemot's book from my aunt. If you don't get the "One Night in Rome" by heart, I shall lose all faith in your taste.

LETTER LXV.

TO THE SAME.

Buck's-Head, Glasgow.

I HAD a melancholy ride from Edinburgh—as every man of any sense or feeling must have who quits that beautiful and hospitable city, after a residence half so long as mine. When I had swallowed my solitary cup of coffee and bit of toast, and, wrapping myself in my great-coat, proceeded to the door of Oman's—and saw there the patient Scrub, the lazy John, and the sober shandrydan, all prepared for the journey, —I could not but feel a chilness creep over me at the now visible and tangible approach of my departure. I mounted, however, and seized the reins with a firmness worthy of myself, and soon found myself beyond sight of the obsequious bowings of Mr. Oman and his lackeys—driving at a smart resolute pace along the glorious line of Prince's-Street, which I had so often traversed on different errands, and in such different glee. There was a thick close mist, so that I scarcely saw more than a glimpse or two of some fragments of the Castle as I past—the church-domes and towers floated here and there like unsupported things in the heavens;—and Edinburgh, upon the whole, seemed to melt from before my retreating gaze, "like the baseless fabric of a vision." It was not till I had got fairly out of the town, that the sun shone forth in his full splendour, gilding with his Judas beams the dead white masses of vapour that covered the ground before me—and, by degrees, affording me wider and richer glances of the whole of that variously magnificent champaign.

There is, indeed, a very fine tract of country, stretching for several miles westward from Edinburgh—its bosom richly cultivated and wooded, and its margin on either hand skirt-

ed by very picturesque, if not very majestic, ranges of mountains. After passing over these beautiful ridges, however, the general character of the road to Glasgow is extremely monotonous and uninteresting—there being neither any level sufficient to give the impression of extent, or height sufficient to dignify the scene—but one unbroken series of bare bleak table-land, almost alike desolate-looking where cultivation has been commenced, as where the repose of the aboriginal heather has been left undisturbed. About the conclusion of the third long stage, which brings you within some fifteen or sixteen miles of Glasgow, the country does indeed rise high enough—but I never saw any high country so very dull. The Kirk of Shotts, from which the most dreary ridge takes its name, is situated certainly in one of the last of all places that a member of the old Melrose and Dryburgh school would have thought of for an ecclesiastical building. Yet it is pleasing to see such a building in such a place—and the little dove-cote belfry rises with peculiar expressiveness amidst a land of so little promise. When we had passed the Kirk of Shotts, we gradually descended, and saw from the warmer slopes upon which we travelled, occasional peeps of the rich valley of the Clyde, smiling serenely with all its pomp of woods and waters to the left. The road, however, soon became quite flat again, and excepting one or two little glens close by the way-side, I observed nothing particularly interesting till we came within sight of the city.

The city is (even after Edinburgh) a very fine one. It has no pretensions to any such general majesty of situation as the metropolis—it has nothing that can sustain any comparison with the Rock and the Castle—to say nothing of the hills and the sea—yet it is a grand and impressive city, whether we look at its situation or at its buildings. The Cathedral, in the immediate neighbourhood of which the oldest part of the town stands, is placed on the brink of a commanding eminence, from which there is a continued descent of more than a mile southward to the river—all the intervening space having been long since covered with streets, and

squares, and market-places, by the sons of traffick. The Old Church is at the eastern extremity also of the town—which now seems to be running, after the fashion of the fine people in London, entirely to the west. The main street, through which I made my entrance, the Gallowgate, is a prodigiously fine thing—one of the very finest things, I venture to say, in all Europe—consisting, for the most part, of huge black structures, rising on either side many stories into the air, but diversified, all along, with very picturesque breaks and lights—pillars, turrets, spires, every thing, in a word, that can give the grandeur of variety to a long street cutting the centre of a great city. From this, various minor streets, old and new, sombre and gay, penetrate into the extremities of the peopled place. There is a vast hum, and bustle, and jostling, all along—things of which one meets with very little in Edinburgh; and, indeed, the general air of activity is only second to that of Cheapside. I felt at once that I had got into a very different sort of place from that I had left; but both I and my horse were somewhat wearied with the journey, and the horns of a genuine Buck, proudly projected over the gateway of the hotel to which I had been directed, were to me the most interesting features in the whole Trongate of Glasgow. I am now established in a very snug suite of apartments, from which I command, in the mean time, a view of the whole of this great street, and from which, God willing, I shall go forth to-morrow, refreshed and reinvigorated by a good supper and a good sleep, to examine and criticise Glasgow and its inhabitants.

I told you that I had received, before leaving Edinburgh, various letters of introduction to gentlemen of this place: and I was preparing to set about delivering some of them this morning, immediately after breakfast, when one of the persons I proposed waiting upon anticipated my intentions, and called at the Buck's-Head, with ready and cordial offers

of all manner of civility and attention. This gentleman is a distant relation of my friend W——, who had informed him, by a different letter, of me and all my motions. From what I have seen of him, he is likely to prove a capital *Lionizer;* for he seems to know every thing about Glasgow, and to be very willing to communicate every thing that he does know. What is best of all, he is a perfectly idle man,—a character of very rare occurrence in such a town as this, so that I shall not be troubled in receiving his attentions with the painful idea that I am wasting valuable time. In all the mercantile towns I have previously visited, at home and abroad, it has been my fortune to fall entirely into the hands of merchants; and these, though they are as kind as possible, and as willing as you could wish to entertain you all the evenings, have a sad aversion to having their mornings cut up with parading a stranger through their curiosities. Now, Mr. H—— is probably not unfrequently at a loss how to spend his own mornings in Glasgow, and I am doing him a favour by giving him occupation.

He seemed resolved that I should feel myself perfectly at home in his company, for the very first subject he began to enlarge upon was his own history; and, as we walked along the streets towards the Cathedral, (for that was the first Lion he proposed showing me,) he told me as many anecdotes of his adventures as would fill half-a-dozen even of my letters. He appeared to be very anxious, by the whole drift of his discourse, to create in my mind a very broad and marked line of distinction between himself and the other inhabitants of this his native city, for whom, indeed, it was easy to see he entertains no great feeling of partiality. "You will, no doubt, be much surprised," said he, "to find a person so idle as myself living here among such a set of drudges: but there's a reason for every thing, Doctor Morris; and, let me tell you, I have devilish good reasons for choosing to be a dweller in Glasgow, in spite of all my disgust for the doings of the place."

I comprehend, partly from what he has said, and partly from the conversation of my landlady, Mrs. Jardine, that a

generation or two back, Glasgow was entirely a place of merchandise, and not at all connected with manufactures; that in those days the principal merchants, who had every thing their own way in the town, were not unfrequently persons of very respectable birth and education—some of them younger sons of good gentlemen's families—and all of them accustomed to live on terms of familiarity, if not equality, with the noblesse of the neighbouring counties. The introduction of manufactures, cotton-mills, sugar-works, soap-works, and a thousand other engines of prosperity, has had the effect of causing this primitive aristocracy of traffickers to be invaded in their privileges by a mighty swarm of mere *novi homines*—persons sprung from every variety of mean blood and place, and trained in every variety of narrow-mindedness and ignorance, who have now, by strength of numbers and of purses, almost succeeded in pushing the relics of the old school from their seats of dignity, and who constitute, at this moment, the most prominent element in every large society of Glasgow. My new acquaintance, whose own family held a high place in the days of the elder system, has witnessed, with a most lively dismay, this sad diminution of their importance, and mourns, in other words, over the increased wealth, population, and importance of his native city, as if his own birthright had been invaded at every step of its progressive prosperity. He is attached, however, to the soil of the place, partly by the feelings and recollections of his youth—partly by the necessity of keeping on good terms with an old absurd uncle, who thinks Glasgow the only town in Britain where any man of taste and discernment ought to live; but, most of all, I suspect, (although he did not say any thing expressly on that head,) from the gratification his vanity receives, by means of his sojourn here, he being not only the most idle, but also the most genteel and elegant person in the city, and therefore enjoying, in all fulness, the delights and dignities of being its *arbiter elegantiarum*. He is the very Potts of Glasgow.

Mr. H—— cannot show his face in the Merchant's house, or on the Exchange, or on any other scene,

"Where most our merchants use to congregate,"

without finding himself a very insignificant sort of person; but the matter is much otherwise when he enters a ball-room or assembly. His slim figure, so different from those of the brawny swollen money-getters and punch-drinkers—his *degagée* and polite air, the fruit of his foreign travel, (for he, too, has been a wanderer in his day)—his skill in dancing—his knowledge of women—his flatteries—and his foibles—all have contributed to make him the favourite beau of the ladies of this mercantile city. No young *bourgeoise* can be said to have come out till Mr. H—— has done her the honour to walk down a country-dance with her. Nobody dare venture to say she is a beauty, till his infallible *imprimatur* has been fixed upon her. Although long past the hey-day and buoyancy of youth and youthful spirits, he walks unrivalled and alone, among a thousand more sanguine pretenders—secure in the *non-chalance* of his long-established sway—eternal master of the ceremonies—the Prince and Apostle of the Drawcansirs of the West.

Of the many things on which he piques himself—one, and not the most trivial, is his connexion with the ancient and lofty blood of my friend W——'s family. He goes into Edinburgh now and then, and the reception he meets with there through the means of W——, so very different from the utter neglect with which most Glasgow visiters are received in that metropolis, is always sufficient to renew and refresh this vanity in the most effectual manner. He is proud, moreover, of the high personal character and literary reputation of the laird, and altogether his kinsmanship has become quite one of his hobbies. "My cousin, Mr. W—— of W——," is a formula never out of his mouth. He can say by heart a variety of W——'s minor love poems, which he repeats in a most moving manner to the young ladies, when they are warmed with an extra glass of sherry-negus at a ball-supper. His *chansons-a-boire* furnish him in like manner with a no less appropriate armoury of fascination for the punch-table—and

never does he either sing or say, without introducing a full account of the tie which subsists between his own family and that of his author. My friend, I suppose, has written concerning me in much higher terms than I deserve—for I observe that Mr. H—— takes it for granted I am a man of wonderful accomplishments. I have lost, however, not a little way in his good opinion, by not having been present at a ball and supper, given on board the flag-ship at Leith, the week before I left Edinburgh. He cannot understand how I should have neglected such an opportunity of exhibiting my Cambrian graces. I might tell him I have had the gout—but am quite willing to sustain the weight of his contempt as it is. It is very bad policy to make a man think he has no point of superiority over yourself. I have no ambition to rival the *Toeocracy* of Mr. H——.

Making some allowances for the prejudices of this gentleman—and, above all, for the jaundiced view he may be expected to give of some of the present prime ones in this mercantile city, and their manner of deporting themselves—and having, as usual, my own eyes about me to correct any misstatements that may creep into his account of things, I imagine I have lighted upon an excellent cicerone. I am sure he is, at least, a civil, and he promises no less surely to be an indefatigable one.

P. M.

LETTER LXVII.

TO THE SAME.

The situation of the Cathedral of Glasgow has been so exquisitely described in Rob Roy, that it would be quite useless to do any thing more than refer you to it—only the fine pine

trees which, in the novel, are represented as covering the whole of the opposite bank of the ravine, and extending their funereal shade quite to the back of the cemetery—these (miserabile dictu!) have been sacrificed to the *auri sacra fames*, and that bank is now bare and green, as if black pine had never grown there. The burial-ground, with which the Cathedral is on all sides surrounded, is certainly one of the largest and one of the most impressive I have ever visited. The long and flat grave-stones, in their endless lines, seem to form a complete pavement to the whole surface—making it a perfect street of the dead—the few knots of tall wiry grass and clustering nettles, which find room to shoot from between the layers of stone-work, being enough to increase the dreariness, but not to disturb the uniformity of the scene. The building stands on the declivity of a slight hill, at the bottom of which a brawling rivulet tumbles along with a desolate roar of scanty waters—but it would seem the ground had been dug up originally, so as to give the Cathedral a uniform and even line of foundations. Yet—such in many succeeding centuries has been the enormous accumulation of the dead, that their graves have literally choked up the one end of the church altogether—so that of a tier of windows which are seen entire at the east, at the west the tops only can be traced, sculptured and ornamented like the rest, just peering above the surface of the encroaching tombs.

The feelings one has in visiting a Gothic cathedral, are always abundantly melancholy, but the grand and elevating accompaniments by which this melancholy is tempered in a Catholic, and even in an English cathedral, are amissing—sadly amissing—in the case of a cathedral that has fallen into the hands of the Presbyterians. When one enters one of those antique piles in Southern Germany, or in Spain, (for there only can a Catholic Gothic cathedral be seen in all its glory,) I know not that it is possible for the heart of man to desire any addition to the majestic solemnity of the whole scene. The tall narrow windows, quite dark with the long purple garments of pictured martyrs, apostles, and kings,

tinge every ray that passes through them with the colours and the memory of a thousand years of devotion. The whole immeasurable space below,—nave, transept, and sounding aisles,—are left glowing in their bare marble beneath these floods of enriched and golden light—no lines of heavy pews are allowed to break the surface—it seems as if none could have any permanent place there except those who sleep beneath. You walk from end to end over a floor of tombstones, inlaid in brass with the forms of the departed—mitres, and crosiers, and spears, and shields, and helmets, all mingled together—all worn into glass-like smoothness by the feet and the knees of long departed worshippers. Around, on every side—each in their separate chapel—sleep undisturbed from age to age the venerable ashes of the holiest or the loftiest that of old came thither to worship—their images and their dying-prayers sculptured and painted above the resting-places of their remains. You feel that you are but a visiter amidst the congregation and home of the dead—and walk with gentle steps along the precious pavement, that answers with a clear prophetic echo to your living tread.

The rich old tapestries which sometimes cover the walls of these cathedrals, mingle better with the storied windows than even the finest of painting or Mosaics—for the exhibition of perfect art throws discredit on rude art, however impressive, and disturbs the uniform eloquence with which the whole should be made to teem. But the greatest of all our wants is, that of the long processions of kneeling priests, which carry the eye onward to the steps of some high illuminated altar—where the blaze of the antique candlesticks comes faint and dim through the clouds of perfumed smoke, swung ever and anon, slow and solemn, from their waving censers. It is, I sometimes think, a thousand pities that errors and corruptions, in far different matters, should have made protestants part with so much of the old hereditary ceremonial of the church. Even the sacred music of our forefathers has been abandoned, as if poison had been breathed from its most majestic notes. Who, that ever heard the

grand simple airs to which the Latin Psalms are chanted in the Catholic cathedrals, can doubt that in them we still hear the very sounds which kindled the devotion of the Origens, the Augustines, and the Gregories? They bear no resemblance to any music of modern days;—they are the venerable relics of that Greek music which consisted only in Melody. And why should we have discarded them?—Or why, having discarded them for a time, should we punish our ears and hearts by refusing to return to them?

But if even we have done somewhat wrong—alas! how much greater have been the errors of our Scottish brethren. The line which we have drawn between ourselves and many of the ideas of our fathers, has been stretched by them into an impassable gulf. It is, indeed, true, that they have replaced what they have lost by many things of another description; but it is not when walking among the melancholy aisles of a deserted or profaned cathedral, that one is most likely to do justice to the value of their substitutes. It is more natural, in such a scene, to hope, that corruptions on the one side being amended, reverence on the other may be restored—that the Christian North may, in some after day, acknowledge that the faults were not all on the part of that South to which she owed arts, arms, and religion; and, in the words of the poet,

> ——"all backward driven,
> Roll the barbarian tide, and sue to be forgiven."

The Cathedral of Glasgow, however, with all its nakedness within, and all its desolation without, is a very valuable thing in Scotland; for it is one of a very few of the great ecclesiastical buildings in this country which escaped from the demolishing fury of the first disciples of John Knox. You have probably read, in some of the historians, the anecdote of the mode of its preservation—indeed, if my recollection serves me, it is mentioned in the novel of Rob Roy. Within, there is only the centre of the choir, which is left in a

cathedral-looking style, with pillars, and scutcheons, and monuments; and here one sees that the whole building, when in its original state, must have been a noble and magnificent specimen of the Gothic architecture, in its best and purest, not its gaudiest age. At either extremity of the Cathedral, spaces have been partitioned off from the nave, sufficient to form large and commodious places of Presbyterian worship; and one of these is fitted up with some taste, as well, perhaps, as the eastern end of a Cathedral can be, where the site of the grand altar is occupied with a pulpit—where the lofty pillars and windows are cut by heavy wooden galleries,—and the floor loaded with rows of snug pews boxed in, and lined with green cloth, for the accommodation of sitting, not kneeling worshippers. The transept seems never to have been finished, for it closes abruptly at either side, so as to afford but a faint idea of the shape of the cross. It runs out at one side, however, for a considerable space, in the shape of a low aisle, with a flat roof, on which, in the old times, a garden had been formed, and where a few very ancient apple-trees may still be seen lingering and drooping along the edge of the stone-work. This aisle has the name of "the dripping aisle," derived, no doubt, from the water which finds its way through the crannies of that crazy roof—a name which, I think, Mrs. Radcliffe would have borrowed for some of the scenes of her horrors, had she heard of it. It is the sepulchre of some particular family of the city or neighbourhood.

Among the other profanations which this fine Old Cathedral has had to sustain, not the least has been the erection of various new buildings in its immediate vicinity, quite hostile to the impression its majestic form, left alone in its churchyard, might be so well fitted to convey. On the one hand, on the very edge of the burial-ground, there has been set up a little abominable would-be Gothic church, in the very worst of all possible styles of Gothic imitation—a thing full of windows and corners, with a roof like a barn—and covered—to the shame be it spoken of people who have such abundance of free-stone at their hands—covered with a rude

patched coating of brown lime. It put me in mind of some little hunch-backed, heavy-headed dwarf, aping the port and gestures of a grand giant, whose knee he cannot touch. At the other side, they have put down, still nearer to the Cathedral, a building very passable in itself—nay, very elegant, as buildings go in Scotland—but scarcely, to my mind, less ill-judged in regard to its position. This is the Royal Infirmary—a spacious, handsome house, in the Grecian style, or, rather, in what is called now-a-days the Grecian style of architecture. In order to make room for it so near the Old Church, the good wise folks of Glasgow pulled down a few years ago, as my guide informs me, the ruins of the ancient Archiepiscopal Palace or Castle, which occupied, with a very different kind of propriety, the same commanding spot. Surely this was a very unnecessary piece of barbarity—but, if the Old Castle was to be removed, they might, at least, have erected in its room something that would have better harmonized with the neighbourhood of so grand a church.

What one calls, in common parlance, a handsome building in these days, is often a thing which has neither grandeur nor beauty. Indeed, modern buildings, in general, are so uninteresting in their general shape, and their surface is so much frittered down with different rows of windows, and with a complexity of trivial and unprofitable parts, that they scarcely ever tell much upon the imagination, or convey to the eye any one broad and palpable concord of forms. The necessity of having different flats or stories, must always be in some measure hostile to simplicity. No pillar can stretch from the top to the bottom of such a building, without doing it more harm than good; and the expedient of piling different orders of architecture one above another, although it was employed with a noble effect in the Coliseum at Rome, and in other amphitheatres, seems to lose all its dignity when interspersed with the paltry little windows of modern days. These smooth and glazed rows never fail to destroy the conception of a vast and magnificent space in the interior.

The Gothic buildings, in general, have no want of unity.

The multiplicity of parts is indeed great, but they are made quite easy to be comprehended by their repetition: and the design of the whole is always evidently subservient to one purpose.

I take it, Mr. W——, in his description of my character to his cousin, had done at least full measure of justice to my antiquarian propensities; for he seemed to think it a matter of course, that my inclinations would lead me to give the whole of my first day to the most ancient part of the city of Glasgow. This, as I mentioned, is the part immediately in the neighbourhood of the Cathedral—the archbishop and his court of deans, chanters, precentors and prebendaries, having, of course, been the lords paramount of attraction in those days to the burghers, who lived chiefly by their means. There are several entire streets of the episcopal city still remaining—all in utter disrepute, as might be expected from their situation, and inhabited by the lowest vulgar: but all of them containing the shells of fine old houses, much superior in the taste of their architecture to the more splendid buildings which fill the more spacious streets of the modern city of merchandise. On some of these old houses, I could trace various coats-of-arms, from which, had Glasgow a W—— to decipher them, I doubt not, much of their history might easily be gathered. His kinsman possesses a little tincture of his lore, and pointed out to me, in different quarters, the bearings of particular families or bishops in a sufficiently knowing style. In many quarters, he showed me the shields of the House of Hamilton, and the Stewarts, Lords of Minto—in which families successively was vested the regality, or lay lordship of the archiepiscopal lands shortly after the Reformation. He showed me also one large and fine old building, which formerly was a residence of the Montroses, and still bears the name of Montrose-lodge—and it was this very house, as he tells me, that Darnley occupied during that illness which brought Mary from Edinburgh to be his nurse, only a few weeks before the catastrophe of the Kirk-in-the-field. The most extensive of these ancient streets, however, is not so abundant in these

vestiges of ancient pomp as the minor ones. It stretches quite along the brow of the hill, and commands a fine prospect of the whole city, old and new. Its name is Rotten-row—a name, by the way, which my cicerone professed himself incapable of explaining, but which was quite familiar and intelligible to my ears. It comes, I doubt not, from the same root with *routine*, and signifies nothing more than the row or street of *processions*. It was here that the host and the images of the saints were carried on festivals, with all the usual splendour of Catholic piety. The same name, derived from the very same practice still subsisting, may be found in many towns in Germany. I remember, in Ratisbonne, in particular, a *Rotten-gasse* close by the Cathedral—and, indeed, all over Catholic Germany, the *Dommherr* or Canon, who walks first on those occasions, bears a title of the same etymology—that of *Rott-meister*, namely—which is literally procession-leader, or master. I remembered to have met with the name of this Glasgow Rotten-row in my reading, and on applying to my friend, he told me, that it occurs in Blind Harry's History of Sir William Wallace. After the famous exploit of the burning of the barns of Ayr, where Pembroke, and a great number of the English lords were destroyed together, Wallace marched during the whole night, that he might, if possible, surprise Glasgow. On reaching the Clyde, he divided his forces, leading in person the main body up the heart of the city, and sending Sir John the Grahame, his Achates, with another, to make a circuit, and enter by this Rotten-row. If you have Blind Harry by you, you may turn to the passage, and you will find a very animated description of the battle which ensued. Wallace was encountered mid-way up the town, exactly where the College of Glasgow now stands, by the English bishop of Edward's making—Beck; and while the strife was *adhuc sub judice*, the scales were turned in his favour by the arrival of the Grahame, who took the bishop in the rear.

After we had perambulated all these scenes, we found it was nearly time for dinner, and so parted for the day. I should have told you before, that I had another visiter early in the

morning, besides Mr. H——. This was a Mr. P——, a respectable merchant of the place, also an acquaintance of my friend W——. He came before H——, and after professing himself very sorry that his avocations would not permit him to devote his forenoon to my service, made me promise to dine with him—a proposal to which, indeed, I could have no kind of objection.

Being afraid that I might have some difficulty in finding the way to his house, he proposed that I should meet him at the Coffee-room, or Exchange, exactly at a quarter before five o'clock, from which place, he said, he would himself conduct me to his residence. My rendezvous is a very large, ill-shaped, low-roofed room, surrounded on all sides with green cane chairs, small tables, and newspapers, and opening by glass folding-doors, upon a paved piazza of some extent. This piazza is, in fact, the Exchange, but the business is done in the adjoining room, where all the merchants are to be seen at certain hours of the day. I have seldom seen a more amusing medley. Although I have travelled only forty miles from Edinburgh, I could, with difficulty, persuade myself that I was still in the same kingdom. Such roaring! such cursing! such peals of discord! such laughter! such grotesque attitudes! such arrogance! such vulgar disregard of all courtesy to a stranger! Here was to be seen the counting-house *blood*, dressed in a box-coat, Belcher handkerchief, and top-boots, or leather gaiters, discoursing (Ædepol!) about brown sugar and genseng! Here was to be seen the counting-house *dandy*, with whalebone stays, stiff neckcloth, surtout, Cossacks, a spur on his heel, a gold-headed cane on his wrist, and a Kent on his head, mincing primly to his brother dandy some question about pullicat handkerchiefs. Here was to be seen the counting-house *bear*, with a grin, and a voice like a glass-blower. Here, above all, was to be seen the Glasgow *literateur*, striding in his corner with a pale face, and an air of exquisite abstraction, meditating, no doubt, some high paragraph for the Chronicle, or, perchance, some pamphlet against Dr. Chalmers. Here, in

a word, were to be seen abundant varieties of folly and presumption—abundant airs of plebeianism. I was now in the Coffee-room of Glasgow.

My friend soon joined me, and observing, from the appearance of my countenance, that I was contemplating the scene with some disgust—"My good fellow," said he, "you are just like every other well-educated stranger that comes into this town; you cannot endure the first sight of us mercantile whelps. Do not, however, be alarmed; I will not introduce you to any of these cattle at dinner. No, sir, you must know that there *are* a few men of refinement and polite information in this city. I have warned two or three of these *rarœ aves*, and, depend upon it, you shall have a very snug *day's work*." So saying, he took my arm, and observing that five was *just on the chap*, hurried me through several streets and lanes till we arrived in the ——, where his house is situated. His wife was, I perceived, quite the fine lady, and, withal, a little of the blue-stocking. Hearing that I had just come from Edinburgh, she remarked, that Glasgow would be seen to much disadvantage after that elegant city. "Indeed," said she, "a person of taste must, of course, find many disagreeables connected with a residence in such a town as this; but Mr. ——'s business renders the thing necessary for the present, and one cannot make a silk purse of a sow's ear—he, he, he!" Another lady of the company carried this affectation still further; she pretended to be quite ignorant of Glasgow and its inhabitants, although she had lived among them the greater part of her life, and, by-the-by, she seemed to be no chicken. I was afterwards told by my friend, Mr. H——, that this damsel had, in reality, sojourned a winter or two at Edinburgh, in the capacity of *lick-spittle*, or *toad-eater*, to a lady of quality, to whom she had rendered herself amusing by a malicious tongue; and that during this short absence, she had embraced the opportunity of utterly forgetting every thing about the west country. But there would be no end of it, were I to tell you all.

The dinner was excellent, although calculated, apparently,

for forty people rather than for sixteen, which last number sat down. Capital salmon, and trout almost as rich as salmon, from one of the lochs—prime mutton from Argyleshire, very small and sweet, and indeed ten times better than half the venison we see in London—veal not inferior—beef of the very first order—some excellent fowls in curry; every thing washed down by delicious old West India Madeira, which went like elixir vitæ into the recesses of my stomach, somewhat ruffled in consequence of my riotous living in Edinburgh. A single bottle of hock, and another of white hermitage, went round, but I saw plainly that the greater part of the company took them for perry or cider. After dinner we had two or three bottles of port, which the landlord recommended as being *real stuff*. Abundance of the same Madeira, but to my sorrow no claret—the only wine I ever care for more than half-a-dozen glasses of. While the ladies remained in the room, there was such a noise and racket of coarse mirth, ill restrained by a few airs of sickly sentiment on the part of the hostess, that I really could neither attend to the wine nor the dessert; but after a little time, a very broad hint from a fat Falstaff, near the foot of the table, apparently quite a privileged character, thank Heaven! set the ladies out of the room. The moment after which blessed consummation, the butler and footman entered, as if by instinct, the one with a huge punch bowl, and the other with, &c.

A considerable altercation occurred on the entrance of the bowl, the various members of the company civilly entreating each other to officiate, exactly like the "Elders," in Burns's poem of *The Holy Fair*, "bothering from side to side" about the saying of grace. A middle-aged gentleman was at length prevailed upon to draw "the china" before him, and the knowing manner in which he forthwith began to arrange all his materials, impressed me at once with the idea that he was completely master of the noble science of making a bowl. The bowl itself was really a beautiful old piece of porcelain. It was what is called *a double bowl*, that is, the coloured surface was cased in another of pure white net-work, through which the red and blue flowers and trees shone out most beautifully. The sugar being melted with a little cold water, the artist squeezed about a dozen lemons through a wooden strainer,

and then poured in water enough almost to fill the bowl. In this state the liquor goes by the name of Sherbet, and a few of the connoisseurs in his immediate neighbourhood were requested to give their opinion of it—for, in the mixing of the sherbet lies, according to the Glasgow creed, at least one half of the whole battle. This being approved by an audible smack from the lips of the umpires, the rum was added to the beverage, I suppose in something about the proportion of one to seven. Last of all, the maker cut a few limes, and running each section rapidly round the rim of his bowl, squeezed in enough of this more delicate acid to flavour the whole composition. In this consists the true *tour-de-maitre* of the punch-maker.

The punch being fairly made, the real business of the evening commenced, and giving its due weight to the balsamic influence of the fluid, I must say the behaviour of the company was such as to remove almost entirely the prejudices I had conceived, in consequence of their first appearance and external manners. In the course of talk, I found that the coarseness which had most offended me, was nothing but a kind of waggish disguise, assumed as the covering of minds keenly alive to the ridiculous, and therefore studious to avoid all appearance of finery—an article which they are aware always seems absurd when exhibited by persons of their profession. In short, I was amongst a set of genuinely shrewd, clever, sarcastic fellows, all of them completely *up to trap*—all of them good-natured and friendly in their dispositions—and all of them inclined to take their full share in the laugh against their own peculiarities. Some subjects, besides, of political interest, were introduced and discussed in a tone of great good sense and moderation. As for wit, I must say there was no want of it, in particular from the "privileged character" I have already mentioned. There was a *breadth* and *quaintness* of humour about this gentleman, which gave me infinite delight; and, on the whole, I was really much disposed at the end of the evening, (for we never looked near the drawing-room,) to congratulate myself on having made a good exchange for the self-sufficient young Whig coxcombs of Edinburgh. Such is the danger of trusting too much to first impressions. The Glasgow people would, in general, do well to assume as their motto, "*Fronti nulla fides;*" and yet there are not a few of them whose faces I should be

very sorry to see any thing different from what they are. So much for my first day in Glasgow. P. M.

LETTER LXVIII.

TO THE SAME.

Buck's-Head, Glasgow.

NEXT morning I devoted to visiting the University here, and paying my respects to several of the Professors, to whom I had received letters of introduction from several of my friends in Edinburgh, as well as London. I found the buildings very respectable in appearance—and altogether much more academical in their style than those of Edinburgh. The reason of this is, that they are for the most part much more ancient—or rather, perhaps, that they resemble much more what my eyes had been accustomed to at Cambridge and Oxford.

The University consists, as in Edinburgh, of a single College, but it is a much more venerable and wealthy foundation, and the Professors, instead of occupying separate houses in different parts of the town, as in Edinburgh, are lodged all together in a very handsome oblong court, (like the close of some of our cathedrals,) immediately beside the quadrangles used for public purposes. These quadrangles are two in number, and their general effect is much like that of some of our English third-rate colleges. The first one enters is a very narrow one, surrounded with black buildings of a most sombre aspect, and adorned on one side with a fine antique stair, which leads to their Faculty-Hall, or Senate-House. The second, to which you approach by a vaulted passage under a steeple, is much larger, but the effect of it is quite spoiled by a large new building in the Grecian style, which has been clumsily thrust into the midst of the low towers and curtains of the old monastic architecture. Both courts are paved all over with smooth flag stones—for the Scottish academics are not of such orderly habits as to admit of their quadrangles being covered with fine bowling-greens as ours are. However, I was certainly much pleased with the appearance of the whole structure.

From the second court, another arched way leads into an open square behind, which is not built round, but which contains in separate edifices the University Library on one hand—

and, on the other, the Hunterian Museum, which you know was left in the collector's will to this seminary, at which he had received the early part of his education. The Museum is certainly a beautiful and classical building—so much of it at least as meets the eye in looking at it from the College. As yet I have seen nothing in Scotland that can be compared with it. The front consists of a very magnificent portico, supported by fine Doric pillars, and rising behind into a very graceful dome of stone-work. The College gardens stretch away in the rear of this building, to apparently a very considerable extent, forming a rich back-ground of lawns and trees, and affording a delightful rest to the eye, after the dust and glare of the mob-covered streets of the city. It was in one of the walks of these gardens—(one can never help talking of the incidents of these novels, as if they were all matters of fact,)—that Rob Roy prevented the duel between Frank and Rashleigh Osbaldistone. It was in them that good worthy Dr. Reid (honest man) used to pace when he was meditating the foundations of his inquiry into the Human Mind. It was in them that the most absent of men, Adam Smith, used to wander and loiter when he was preparing for the world the more precious gift of his Wealth of Nations. It was here, no doubt, that Dr. Moore walked, his features twisted with the pangs parturient of his famous Essay on the Greek Particles. It was here that his successor, Mr. John Young, must have ruminated with far blander emotions over the yet unpromulgated wit of the exquisite "Criticism on the Elegy written in a country churchyard."

My principal object, however, was not so much to examine the minutiæ of these, the externals of the University, as to pick up some accurate notions of the way in which its business is conducted. As the hour, therefore, did not admit of my paying visits of ceremony, I determined to go, before making myself known to any one, and hear some of the principal Professors deliver their prælections in their class-rooms. My guide, being an old Alumnus of this Alma Mater, knew quite well the particular hours set apart for each individual teacher, and gave me all the information I could have desired about the respective merits of those I might have it in my power to hear. The man of highest reputation for talent among the whole body, he told me, was the same Professor of Greek to whom I have just alluded—so my first

ambition was to hear him—indeed, that ambition had long before been kindled within me by the eulogies I had heard passed upon this eminent Grecian, not only by Mr. W——, and the literati of Edinburgh—but by the much higher authorities of Porson, Burney, and Routh, with all of whom Mr. Young lived in habits of close and intimate friendship, during the frequent visits he paid to England. Nay, the Professor's fame had reached me in quarters still more remote, and at least as respectable, for I remember Old Wyttenbach asked me many questions about him in 1802, when I spent the spring under his roof at Leyden—and used to testify much astonishment at my knowing so little about this personage, whom he commonly called "*examius ille apud Scotos philologus.*"

Dismissing my cicerone, therefore, I walked about the courts of the College by myself, till the rush of lads began to flow toward Mr. Young's lecture-room, and then insinuated myself with the crowd into the interior of the place. I took my station at the extremity of a bench, in the darkest part of the room, which seemed to be occupied by a set of the more elderly students, among whom I imagined my own grave aspect would be less likely to attract attention from the Professor. By and by, in he came, and mounted his little pulpit, between two low windows at the opposite extremity—and I immediately hoisted my spectacles, in order that I might scrutinize the physiognomy of the Philologist before his lecture should begin. A considerable number of minutes elapsed, during which one of the students, perched above his fellows in a minor sort of rostrum, was employed in calling over the names of all who were or should have been present, pretty much after the fashion of a regimental muster-roll. The Professor was quite silent during this space, unless when some tall awkward Irishman, or young indigenous blunderer, happened to make his *entree* in a manner more noisy than suited the place—on which occasion a sharp-cutting voice from the chair was sure to thrill in their ears some brief but decisive query, or command or rebuke—"*Quid agas tu, in isto angulo, pedibus strepitans et garriens?*"—"*Cave tu tibi, Dugalde M'Quhirter, et tuas res agas!*"—"*Notetur, Phelimius O'Shaughnesy, sero ingrediens, ut solvat duas asses sterlinenses!*"—"*Iterumne admonendus es, Nicolæi Jarvie?*"—"*Quid hoc rei, Francisce Warper?*" &c. &c. &c.

It required no imagination to detect the marks of clear thorough going perspicacity of intellect, intermingled in no usual manner, with those of a fine fancy and an overflowing enthusiasm, in the lineaments of this admirable Professor. I know not that ever I met with any of the "Magnanimi Heroes" of philology, that could show half so much of his art in his visage. Old Parr you have seen—and you know well that his face is but a heavy one, in spite of the relief it has from the unquenchable dazzle of his large eyes. Porson's face was a grand one in its way, but I cannot say I could ever see much in it very distinctly, except the general all-pervading radiance of his sheer genius. Wyttenbach is a solemn, sad-looking, venerable old gentleman, but one would, *prima facie*, take him for a moral philosopher rather than a philologer. Hermann's face is full of a mad fire like Porson's—and I suppose Nature meant him to be not a professor but a poet—in spite of the *De Metris*. Tom Gaisford's melancholy swarthy countenance has a certain fixed determined stare about it, that shows well enough he will never be weary of hunting authorities in the wildest thickets of that deep jungle-wood, which he mistakes for Parnassus. But the true, lively, keen, hair-splitting expression of a genuine root-catcher, was never exhibited any where so broad and so brightly as in the physiognomy of Professor Young. Never was I more strongly reminded of the truth of that wise saying of the wisest of men, which the sceptical wits of the present age are pleased to scorn as much as any of the dicta of poor Spurzheim,—"*A man may be known by his look, and one that hath understanding by his countenance, when thou meetest him.*"*

The intense power of general observation marked immediately above the eye brows of this remarkable person, might be supposed to exist in many kinds of individuals, noways resembling him in the peculiar turn of his mind. I have seen it as strong about the sinus frontalis of a lawyer—a calculator—above all, a painter—or a poet fond of drawing the materials of his poetry from what he sees in the world about him, and its actual inhabitants and doings. It is not there that the system of Spurzheim leads one to expect to find the *differentia*, properly so called, of a philological cranium. Gall says, that in his youth he had reason to be vexed, that, while several of his school-

* Eccles. xiv. 29.

fellows learnt by heart, even things which they did not understand, with great facility, he had the utmost difficulty in engraving on his memory a much less number of words; and by accident, first of all, he was led to make the observation, that in those individuals who possessed this extraordinary facility of learning by heart, the eyes were very prominent. In his system, therefore, he has established, among others, a separate organ of words, the greater than common development of which is denoted by the greater than common prominence of the eyes. Refining by degrees on his observations and conclusions, he has said, that in some cases the eyes are not only prominent, but also depressed downwards, so that the under eye-lid presents a sort of roll, or appears swollen and tumid; and such persons, adds he, are fond of philology, that is, they like to study the spirit of different languages.

I must own that this was one of the good Doctor's niceties, which I always regarded with some measure of scepticism, till I had an opportunity of observing the organization of this great Glasgow Philologist. The very appearance of the eyes, described so minutely and graphically by the German, is precisely the thing most remarkable in the whole of this remarkable countenance. The eyes themselves are gray, and full of a bright gleaming intelligence, but their effect is peculiar, and quite distinct from those of any bright eyes I ever observed; and, on close inspection, I can attribute their peculiarity to nothing but this most marked philological conformation in the way of their being set into the head. They are absolutely pushed out of their sockets by the redundance of this particular faculty below; their under lids stand forth, square, and distinct, from the texture of the face, as if half its muscular energy were concentrated in that minute point. It is true, however, that this effect is mightily favoured by the appearance of the other parts of the countenance—the broad girdle of wrinkles about the eyes themselves—the deep lines which converge from all the upper forehead upon the centre of the nose—the sharp bony angular nose itself—the lips compressed like the vice of a blacksmith; each and all of these features must shed, no doubt, a cordial return of acumen upon the eloquence of the projecting eye which overlooks and illuminates them.

His mode of lecturing, or rather of expounding (for it was in

that exercise that I found him engaged) harmonizes most perfectly with the expectations this physiognomy would be likely to create. It is impossible that any man should display a more lynx-like intellectual glance than Mr. Young scatters upon every subject that comes in his way. There is no satisfying of his restless mind, on any point, with half or quarter explanations; one sees that he must be in agony till he has got to the bottom of his difficulty, and grubbed up the entangling thorn, root by root, let it be planted as firmly, as deeply, and as broadly as it may. The way in which he goes about this business has, no doubt, been borrowed in a great measure from Horne Tooke; and at times, indeed, there were tones and gestures which almost made me dream I had leaped some ten years back, and was seated once more at the fire-side in Wimbledon, opposite to the old red sofa, from which that mighty intellectual Nimrod used to shoot his "ἐπεα πτεροεντα." But the professor has abundance of originality about every part of his discourse; and, above all, he is quite a different sort of person from Horne in the article of fine and tender feeling. I own I was quite thunderstruck to find him, all of a sudden, passing from a transport of sheer verbal ecstacy about the particle ἀρα, into an ecstacy quite as vehement, and a thousand times more noble, about the deep pathetic beauty of one of Homer's conceptions, in the expression of which that particle happens to occur. Such was the burst of enthusiasm, and the enriched mellow swell of his expanding voice, when he began to touch upon this more majestic key, that I dropped for a moment all my notions of the sharp philologer, and gazed on him with a higher delight, as a genuine lover of the soul and spirit which has been clothed in the words of antiquity. At the close of one of his fine excursions into this brighter field, the feelings of the man seemed to be rapt up to a pitch I never beheld exemplified in any orator of the chair. The tears gushed from his eyes amidst their fervid sparklings; and I was more than delighted when I looked round and found that the fire of the Professor had kindled answering flames in the eyes of not a few of his disciples.

Assuredly, Mr. Young must have been a fine orator in any department. He is, without exception, the best reader I ever heard of Greek; and I have heard very few readers of English that I could for a moment compare with him. Nor

is this slight praise from an Englishman to a Scotchman. The music of the northern tongue has never become grateful to my ears; but I could not find a moment's time to recollect that there was any provinciality in the notes of this voice while I was listening to it. The Scottish method of pronouncing Greek, too, although I have no doubt it is in many points much more like the true way than our own, has always, from association or otherwise, appeared to me to have a great degree of barbarity and uncouthness about it; but this prejudice, like a thousand others, dissolved before the flash of this man's genuine power. Assuredly, if the young men educated here do not become fervent Grecians, it is not for want either of precept or example in their Professor. But the truth is, as I have mentioned before, that, according to the present style of academical education in Scotland, it is a matter of comparatively little consequence whether a professor of languages be or be not himself an eminent scholar or a skilful teacher. The clay is not so long in his hands as to allow him the power of moulding it to his will. Before the vessel is tempered in its fabric—long, very long before it can receive the high finishing polish which such an artist as this could give it, it is hurried away and filled with a premature, and, what is worse, a chaotic infusion of ingredients. In spite of all these disadvantages, however, it is impossible that such very surpassing energies as those of this Professor, should be exerted so long without producing some effect; accordingly, I am informed the study of the ancient languages does thrive here at the present time in a degree much beyond any of the other Universities of Scotland. Let us hope that the spark he has kindled may, ere long, find vent to break out into a noble and illuminating flame. But, limited as he is in his means of benefiting those immediately about him by his admirable prælections, is it not a thousand pities that he should not atone to his genius and his fame for this sad defect, by making the world at large more extensively partakers in the fruits of his studies, —by creating for himself, in other words, a name as splendid as Nature has entitled him to bequeath to posterity?

What Shakspeare has said of Royal Beauty, may be said as well of Mental Power—

"Shame it should die, and leave behind no *copy*."

* * * * *

I made a visit immediately afterwards, in the same manner, to the lecture-room of Mr. Jardine, the Professor of Logic, for I had heard of this gentleman also in a thousand quarters, and was anxious to see and hear him in his own place. I heard him talked of in a particular style of commendation one day in a large company of the Edinburgh literati, among whom it appeared there was a great number of his former disciples; and, truly, the affectionate terms in which they delivered themselves, were almost as honourable to themselves as to their old teacher. They represented him as a person who, by the singular felicity of his *tact* in watching and encouraging the developments of youthful minds, had done more good to a whole host of individuals, and gifted individuals too, than their utmost gratitude could ever adequately repay. They spake of him as of a kind of intellectual father, to whom they were proud of acknowledging the eternal obligations of their intellectual being. I never heard so much enthusiasm expressed by pupils for their master—no not even at the commemoration of Rugby.

I did not, however, hear the Professor deliver one of the lectures by which these gentlemen professed themselves to have been so largely benefitted. It so happened, that at the hour I went, he was engaged, not in prælection, but in examining his pupils on some of the subjects of a lecture he had delivered on the preceding day. Perhaps, however, the benefits derived from his teaching may be traced in no inconsiderable measure to his peculiar excellence in this very branch of his duties. Such a clear manly method of putting his questions—such a ready manner of comprehending the drift of the replies he received—such skilful nicety in drawing out the workings of perplexed minds, and making those who were puzzled find for themselves the thread that should

lead them out of their labyrinths—and all this accompanied with such an honest, downright, paternal sort of kindness in voice, look, and gesture—I have really never before seen a more amiable combination of the faculties most precious in a teacher of youth. I think it no wonder, that they who have sat at the feet of this good man, should be very slow in losing their memory of so much moral worth and real talent, exerted in so rare a style of union for the furtherance of their improvement. It is no wonder, that the days spent in drinking wisdom from so pure and liberal a fountain, should form, in feeling and intelligent minds, some of the dearest of those youthful recollections, which afford throughout the years of active and bustling life, the most charming breathing-places of reposing meditation. In such feelings it must be that such a spirit finds the best reward of all its labours. Wherever such a man as this goes, throughout all the districts of the land in which he has so long exerted himself, he is sure to meet with eyes that kindle into a filial flame, when they see once more the venerable lineaments of his well-known face. He has created for himself a mighty family, among whom his memory will long survive—by whom all that he said and did —his words of kind praise and kind censure—his gravity and his graciousness—will, no doubt, be dwelt upon with warm and tender words and looks, long after his earthly labours shall have been brought to their close. The good such men do is of such a kind, that it cannot "die with them."

* * * * *

I waited upon this excellent person soon after the conclusion of his examination, and delivered several letters I had for him from his friends in Edinburgh. He asked me to dine with him, to which I assented, and in the meantime he proposed we should go and see the Hunterian Museum together, as there was still an hour or two we had to spare.

This Museum is chiefly remarkable for the very fine collection of anatomical preparations it contains, and I am glad I had an opportunity of seeing them, as one of them strongly exemplified a fact concerning the junction of the vertebræ,

which I have stated at some length in my treatise *De Muliere, &c.* p. 97.* There is also an excellent collection of medals, but I could not be permitted to see them at this time, owing to the strict regulations under which their inspection is laid—necessarily, I well believe, from what I know of the consciences of collectors. Their stuffed animals are not very numerous, nor have they been allotted a very conspicuous situation, being placed in small rooms below stairs, where the elephants and hippopotamuses look rather disconsolate. In one corner I saw an Egyptian mummy, which is shut up in a huge wooden case, strongly clasped with iron bars, as if to prevent it from coming out and chasing any of the Professors up stairs, when they happen to visit that apartment at a late and dreary hour. As it was entirely enveloped in the original linen swaddling-bands, I had no opportunity of investigating the organ of combativeness in the lower lateral part of the forehead, which is said by Spurzheim to be large in most mummies.

In another apartment,—by the way a singularly elegant one both in shape and furniture,—there is a fine assemblage of pictures. The collection is not extensive, but most of the specimens are of rare excellence. There is a beautiful Guido, representing the Virgin watching the infant Christ asleep. There is a St. Catharine, by Domenichino, full of expression—a head of St. Peter, by Rubens, with rather too much of the homeliness of the human passions, but gloriously coloured. The collection is also graced with a Correggio—the Virgin and Child, and St. Joseph,—a picture in capital preservation. The Virgin is represented with a sweet look of maternal tenderness, putting upon the child a new vest, which appears, from the implements introduced in the picture, to be the workmanship of her own hands. There is a Salvator, not a landscape, but a group of figures—Laomedon, detected by Apollo and Neptune, all in a very bold and striking style of mastery. There is a Danae and the Golden Shower, by my old favourite Luca Giordano, an artist of whom shamefully little is known or thought in this country.

* I should mention, that in the Second Edition, published at Paris in 1813, it is at page 103.

There is, besides, a small inimitable Murillo, the Good Shepherd.

They have also a landscape by Rembrandt, a flat country, with a town in the distance, a scene in which it is evident no object has been introduced for the sake of ornament. There is something in the perspective of level plains which always strikes me—Welchman though I be—as more sublime than any view clogged and obstructed with mountains, or other large objects. I think that a barrier of mountains rising between the spectator and the horizon, suggests the idea of limitation somehow, and circumscription. Your eye is stopped, and your attention trammelled, by the different summits and eminences; and in examining the localities of a particular spot, you lose the notion of what Homer calls *the immeasurable earth.* The ocean, by recalling the idea of infinitude, inspires a sense of the sublime; but, at the same time, in contemplating a marine landscape, we feel a certain coldness, resulting from the want of life and vegetation. The ανηριχμον γελασμα, of which Æschylus speaks, is, after all, but a cheerless thing, compared with the smiling repose of sunbeams on the long vanishing distances of a track glowing with the vestiges of human labour and human happiness. There are some other pictures, but I have mentioned the most remarkable.

After dinner, and an excellent bottle of wine, the Professor took me with him to the porter's lodge of the College, one of the rooms of which is used by some of the brethren as a kind of common-room. Here I spent the evening very delightfully, in a snug, quiet, intelligent little society. We played whist till ten, then supped on a glorious Glasgow luxury of fresh herrings, and concluded the whole with a moderate *quantum sufficit* of rum-punch, in the manufacture of which some one or two of these learned persons seemed to be no whit inferior to the best of the neighbouring citizens.

P. M.

LETTER LXXIX.

TO THE SAME.

Buck's Head.

NEXT day, I spent almost the whole morning in company with my excellent cicerone, in taking a survey of a few of the most extensive manufactories of this place. As these, however, must be in all respects quite similar to those of other towns which you have often seen, I shall not trouble you with any particular description of what I saw. It appeared to me, upon the whole, that the Glasgow manufacturers conduct matters with more attention to the comforts of those whom they employ, than most of their brethren elsewhere; a fact which, indeed, I remember to have heard mentioned in Parliament a few sessions ago, with a very laudable degree of pride, by the Member for the town, Mr. Kirkman Finlay, himself one of the greatest merchants of Scotland, and, I well believe, one of the most intelligent also, in spite of all the jokes against him in the Courier. I was assured, at least, that there prevails in this place nothing of the vile custom of unceasing labour by day and by night, which has been, with so much noble passion, described and branded in the words of the Wanderer.*

* The passage is this—

——"When soothing darkness spreads
O'er hill and vale," the Wanderer thus expressed
His recollections—"and the punctual stars,
While all things else are gathering to their homes,
Advance, and in the firmament of heaven
Glitter—but undisturbing, undisturbed,
As if their silent company were charged
With peaceful admonitions for the heart
Of all-beholding Man, Earth's thoughtful Lord;
Then in full many a region, once, like this,
The assured domain of calm simplicity
And pensive quiet, an unnatural light,
Prepared for never-resting labour's eyes,
Breaks from a many-windowed fabric huge;

After being confined for hours to the steam-heated atmosphere of these places, my ears dingling with the eternal rock and buzz of wheels and spindles, and my eyes fretted and inflamed with the flakes of cotton every where flying about; and, in spite of all that I have said, my spirits being not a little depressed by the contemplation of so many thousands of poor creatures shut out in their captivity from

> The gentle visitations of the sun—
> And in these structures mingled, old and young,
> And unripe sex with sex, for mutual taint,

—my spirits being somewhat saddened with all these poisonous sights, and sounds, and reflections, I readily embraced the proposal of my friend—that we should walk forth, namely, into the fields, and refresh ourselves with breathing the unpolluted air of heaven, till the hour of dinner.

He led me into a large piece of meadow ground, which stretches along the banks of the Clyde to the east of the city, and which, being public property, is left in its free untainted verdure, forming a beautiful contrast to the dust of the city, and a precious breathing-place to its inhabitants. It forms, in fact, a fine park—indeed, excepting London and Dublin, there is no town in these islands which possesses any thing that can be compared with it. My friend told me, however, that with all its natural attractions, it is far from being much

> And at the appointed hour a bell is heard—
> Of harsher import than the curfew knoll
> That spake the Norman conqueror's stern behest,
> A local summons to unceasing toil!
> Disgorged are now the ministers of day;
> And as they issue from the illumined pile,
> A fresh band meets them at the crowded door
> And in the courts—and where the rumbling stream
> That turns the multitude of dizzy wheels,
> Glares, like a troubled spirit, in its bed
> Among the rocks below—Men, maidens, youths,
> Mothers and little children, boys and girls,
> Enter—and each the wonted task resumes
> Within this temple—where is offered up
> To Gain—the master idol of these realms,
> Perpetual sacrificing," &c.

frequented by the fashionables of the place, who prefer walking on the Trongate, or on some of the narrow highways round the town, and leave this delicious Green (for that is the name it goes by) to be trodden almost exclusively by the feet of those whom they are pleased (in contradistinction from themselves) to call the Vulgar. But my friend remembers the old times, when the Green was the constant lounge, and has a pride in being seen walking leisurely under the ancient elms which gave shade to the more judicious worthies of a generation that has passed away.

A tall Monument, in the form of an obelisk, has been erected to the memory of Lord Nelson, in the midst of this green, and contrasts itself agreeably with the level plain surface out of which it arises. Shortly after it was erected, it was struck by lightning—the top was completely shattered—and a yawning fissure points out the course of the destructive element, more than half-way down one of the sides. But it would be a difficult thing to repair this injury, and the people of Glasgow have allowed the Monument to remain exactly as the thunder left it. It has stood for several years in this way—and, I doubt not, will stand for many centuries without any considerable alteration for the worse. In the neighbourhood of the Monument, we saw several elderly citizens playing at the old Scots game of golf, which is a kind of gigantic variety of billiards—the table being a certain space in the green, sometimes of many hundred yards in extent—the holes situated here and there, at great distances—and the balls, which are made very hard, stuffed with feathers, and swung to and fro in a terrific manner, by means of long queues with elastic shafts—a fine healthy game which seems to be a mighty favourite both here and at Edinburgh.

Nearer the margin of the river, which is really a very grand stream here, another wide division of the meadow seemed to be set apart for the purposes of a washing-green. It is here, upon the fine green turf, that the servant-maids of Glasgow love to spread forth their bleaching linen before the sun, wringing the sheets, and giggling and tittering at the passers by. It is here that the corporal takes his forenoon lounge, with his Waterloo medal, and perhaps enters into

some interchange of repartees with the rosy and joyful damsels; so that from less to more, he is ultimately, it may be, induced to add from among them a fifth or sixth wife, to the list of those whom he has already left weeping at Cork, at Manchester, at Hull, at Dundee, and elsewhere. In the present case, the devoted victim leans over her watering-pan, and admires his sinewy limbs, gracefully and freely exhibited beneath the scanty covering of the regimental philabeg —his spirited style of flourishing a sixpenny rattan—the knowing cock of his eye—and the readiness of his retorts —and alas! reflects not how often, and how fatally, the same fascinations may have been practised before—

> Non *sola* comptos arsit adulteri
> Crines, et aurum vestibus illitum
> Mirata, regalesque cultus.

If, perhaps, a shoemaker, or any other common mechanic, happens to pass the group, he is sure to be made the butt of their wit; and, in fact, appears but a poor sneaking devil for the time, although perhaps he treated them with curds and cream on Sunday last. Even a gentleman's servant figures to disadvantage—his showy livery cannot rival the *regales cultus*—and a lamp-lighter is execrable, and fit only to be shuddered at by these fine ladies. But, as I said before, the devoted victim thinks only of him in scarlet; and while the deep tones of his voice sink into her ears, the river appears to flow more smoothly than it ever did before; and the fields to look fresher than ever summer could make them. She remembers the day, when the news of the glorious 18th of June arrived—the enthusiasm with which her master read aloud the newspaper at the breakfast table—the green branches that adorned the streets during the forenoon—and the charming dazzle of the windows, when she walked out to see the illumination in the evening. The remembrance of all these fine things rushes bright upon her fancy—and having once more surveyed the strapping corporal from head to foot, her fate is determined.

Those of the damsels engaged in the actual occupation of

washing their linen, were also worthy of some notice, on account of the peculiar way in which they go about their operations. The greater part of their work is done, not by means of the hands, but the feet, each maiden standing in her tub, and thumping below like an Italian grape-treader, her petticoats being *kilted* considerably above the knee, and her ivory limbs frothed over half way up, with the light foam of the ocean of suds, which their extremities agitate. Some might turn away from this exposure as somewhat indelicate—but I confess I had a pleasure in seeing it—for I consider it as an interesting relic of the fearless purity of the olden times. But, indeed, I think a group of girls washing linen, in whatever way, is always a pretty spectacle, and revives pleasing ideas, concerning the simple fashions of antiquity—when the daughters of kings used to think no shame of asking their father's regal leave to go out and wash their own smocks, and the shirts of the princes their brothers—representing, too, the propriety of majesty itself making a clean appearance at the council-board.*

Seeing that I could easily amuse myself in this place, my friend left me to myself, and went off to pay a visit in the town. I continued my stroll along the breezy banks of the river for a considerable space—but at length found myself a little fatigued, and sat down on one of the benches, which occur every now and then by the side of the walks. I had not sat long till I perceived a brother lounger advancing toward me from the opposite direction, in a meditative attitude; and, surveying the man, I thought I could distinguish him to be one of that class of philosophical weavers, with which the west of Scotland is known to be so plentifully stocked. Nor was I mistaken. The man edged toward

* Πάντα φιλ', ουκ ἂν δή μοι ὑφαλισσεται ἀκτήνην
Τψηλήν, ὑπαπλον, ἵνα πλυτὰ εἵματ' ἅλωμαι
Ἐς ποταμὸν πλυνέουσα, τά μοι ῥερυπασμένα πεπται
Καί δε σοι αυτῇ ἕοικε μετὰ πρώτοισιν ἰόντι
Βουλὰς βουλεύειν καθαρὰ χροΐ εἵματ' ἔχοντα.
Πέντε δέ τοι φίλοι υἷες ἐνὶ μεγάροις γεγάασιν,
Οἱ δυ ὀνύοντες, τρεις δ' ἡΐθεοι ϑαλέθοντες·
Οἱ δ' αἰεὶ ἑθέλουσι, νεόπλυτα εἵματ' ἔχοντες,
Ἐς χορὸν ἔρχεσθαι· τὰ δ' ἐμὴ φρεσὶ πάντα μέμηλεν.

Odyss. Z.

the bench, and soon took his place within a yard of me, with an air of infinite composure. Being seated, he cast one or two sidelong glances upon me, and then fixed his eyes in a very speculative stare upon the water, which rippled within a little distance of his feet—while I, on my part, continued less politely to study him with the eye of a traveller and a craniologist. He was tall and slender in his person, with a bend forward, acquired, no doubt, through the stooping demanded by his vocation—considerably in-kneed and splay-footed—but apparently strong enough and nervous in every part of his muscular frame. He was clad in a very respectable short coat of blue—a waistcoat of deep yellow ground, with thin purple and green stripes crossing each other upon it—a pair of corduroy breeches, unbuttoned at the knees—a thick pair of worsted stockings, hanging loosely about his legs—and a dark red coloured cravat. He seemed to be a man of about fifty years of age, and when he took off his hat to cool himself, the few lank hairs which escaped from below a small striped night-cap on the top of his cranium, were evidently of the same class with those of the Ghost in Hamlet—the "sable silvered." As to his face, its language was the perfection of self-important *non chalance*. A bitter grin of settled scepticism seemed to be planted from his nostril on either side, down almost to the peak of his long unshorn chin—his eye-brows were scanty and scraggy, but drawn together in a cynical sort of knot—and, altogether, the personage gave one the idea of a great deal of glum shrewdness in a small way—I should have mentioned that he had a green apron (the symbol of his trade) wrapped about his middle, beneath his upper garment—and that he held a number of the Edinburgh Review, twisted hard in his left hand. "This is a hot day, friend," said I, willing to enter a little into conversation. The fellow's features involuntarily relaxed themselves a little on the greeting, and he answered very civilly, "Middling warm, sir—Ye'll have been taking a walk?"—"I have," said I, "and I am glad I came this way, for I think the town looks better from where we are than any where else I have been."—"Ye'll be only a stranger, sir?—Indeed, I might have kenn'd, by your lan-

guage, ye were fra the South." "I only came to Glasgow two days ago," said I.—"Glasgow's a very grand ceety noo, sir—a very grand ceety—there is no the like o't in Scotland hooever. I have seen Manchester in my time, but Glasgow clean dings baith it and Edinburgh, and I believe it does most places—we've a noble situation here, sir—a pretty river, navigable quite up to the Broomielaw, for sloops, brigs, and gabbarts, and it might be made passable quite up to Hamilton, but the folk here are keen to keep it to themselves—and it's natural it should be sae."—"The weather is, in general, very wet hereabouts?" said I; "you have very seldom any such stretch of dry weather as the present."—"Very seldom, sir; and I think it may be dooted whether it is not lucky it is sae—the agriculturist, no question, is against the lang weets, but the commercial interest is uppermost here, sir; and what wad come of the Monkland Canal, think ye, if we had not a perpetual drizzle to keep the springs running? There's reason for a' thing, sir—if folk could see it."—"Is that the last number of the Review, friend?" said I, "has it just come out?"—"It *is* the last number, sir, but it is not just come oot—I ken not how it is, but altho' I've gane every other morning to the leebrary, I've never been able to get a haud o't till yestreen—and noo that I have gotten it—I think not that muckle o't—it's very *driegh*."—"*Driegh*," said I, "I am sorry I don't just understand you—what's the meaning of the word, friend, if you please?—I am but a new comer, and don't yet understand the Scots quite so well as I could wish."—"Troth," cried the fellow, with a most gracious smile, "it's nae wonder after a' ye shuid not tak me up—ane's sae muckle in the habit of conversing with people that knows naething but Scots, that ane really forgets what ane says when ane meets with a stranger. *Driegh*, ye see, means just a kind o' mixture of dryness and dreariness, like a lang road atween twa brick walls or sae—the Review's sairly fallen off—but they say Jeffrey's sae muckle ta'en up with the law that he has little time for thae things by what he used to have—and Horner, he's gane—he was a fine lad—weel worth the hail bang o'them—his report on the bullion always seemed to

me to be a maisterly performance. But we have aye Harry Brougham—and, under correction, we have Sir Francis Burdett, sir, which is better still. He's the puir man's friend—I would to God that chap war whare he suld be." —"Sir Francis," said I, "is certainly a very elegant speaker —and, I believe, a very well-meaning gentleman—but where would you have him?"—"At the head, sir—at the head and the helm—there's no salvation for Britain unless Burdett get his way—there'll soon be a dooncome wi' some folk—and that wull be seen."—"Are the weavers hereabouts discontented with the present state of things in general?" said I; "or are you singular in your opinions about political matters?—I have heard a great deal of the men of your profession in this neighbourhood—and I see I have not been misinformed. Some years ago, several Glasgow and Paisley weavers were examined before the House of Commons, and they got great credit for the appearance they made."—"Troth," replied my friend, "there's no question the maist feck o' us are a little ill-pleased with the gate things are ganging—but as you say, sir, the operatives here are a tolerably well-informed class—we tak a philosophical view of what's gaun on—but we have nane of your rampaging Luddite gowks hereawa. Na, na—we had a braw lesson in the ninety-three, and it will no be forgotten in a hurry—let me tell you that, sir. We have an auld Scotch saying—*the burnt bairn dreads the fire.* But, as Dauvid Hume says, honest man,—there's no resisting the general progress of opinion. The march of intellect will carry a' before it, sir. But I'm verry sorry to see the Review fallen away; it was a great waipon ance, and it is a sair pity to see the edge aff." "Works of that kind," said I, "are subject to ups and downs, as well as ministries and governments—the Review might easily be revived surely —there is no want of ability in Scotland." "We're muckle beholden to you, I'm sure," said he, with another still sweeter smile—"I believe it is pretty weel acknowledged noo that this is the country for abeelity; and yet I suppose it is no sae muckle ony natural superiority on oor part, but just oor education that lifts us so much above our neighbours. I know what the state of the English nation is mysell—I once

wrought the most of twa years with M'Taffie and Company, in Manchester." "You have all the advantage," said I "of being taught to read and write—that is a great blessing, for which you are obliged to your Kirk." "Ye have mentioned the greatest of oor obligations to it with which I am acquainted—it wad be weel, in my mind, if Parochial Schools were a' the kirk establishment in Scotland. "You are a Dissenter, I suppose?" said I.—"No, truly," was his answer—"there would be few Seceders, if a body cared as little about thae things as I do. But the world will become enlightened bit by bit. Dauvid Hume has weel remarked, that there is no resisting the silent progress of opinion. What think you, sir, of the doctrine of the perfectibility of the species?" "In truth, friend," said I, "that is a point on which I have not yet been able to come to any very determinate opinion; but I think you said you did not belong to any of the dissenting bodies here. You go to church, then, I suppose, in spite of any of your little objections to the establishment." "Objections!—Lord bless you, sir, I have nae objections to the church; in the present state of things, I'm persuaded the kirk is as good as any thing that could be put in its place—and I'm far from being clear that it would do to want some religious establishment for some time to come yet.—If poor Thomas Paine had been spared—but perhaps ——(taking himself up)—perhaps ye may be of another way of thinking; I wish to say nothing unceevil," added he, with a most condescending grin,—"I hope I shall always respect the prejudices of my fellow-citizens—they are not to be trifled with, however erroneous."—"My good friend," said I, "do not put yourself into any alarm; I assure you my feelings are in no danger. I am to suppose that you don't make a practice of going to church. Does not that appear singular in this part of the country, and give offence to the majority?" "Troth," said he, "to tell you the plain fact, I would not be so very heeding about the majority oot of doors—but a person of a liberal turn in my line of life, cannot always be quite sure of peace in his own house and home. The women, says Hume, were always the chief friends of every superstition, and so I find it sir, and that in my own family. I've

an auld mither, sir, a guid body too, in her way, that keeps me in perfect hett water. I cannot bring in Sandy Spreulls and Jamie Jamieson, and one or two more friends, to talk over a few philosophical topics on a Sabbath at e'en—but we're worried—clean worried—with the auld wife's bergin about infidelity and scoffing—and sic like;—why, it's only Martinmas was a year, that when I was reading a passage from the Review, she gruppit the book fairly oot of my hand, and had it at the back o' the coal, and in a low, before ye could say Jack Robinson—but I bear with a' that—as for the bairns, I find it absolutely necessary to allow her to tak her ain way wi' them. Puir things, they'll get light in time."—"I think you mentioned that you get the Edinburgh Review from a public library," said I, "pray what sort of a library is it—and how are these things managed among you here?"—"Oh—just in a small way, no doubt, as suits our means—but we have a pretty collection in our library noo—we're aye on the increase—even in the warst times of a' we never would hear of parting with our books—we have David Hume's Essays, and several volumes of his Histories—we have Adam Smith—and Locke on the Human Understanding—and Voltaire's Novels—and Lord Lauderdale's Inquiry—and the Pleasures of Hope—and Tannahill's Poems—the Queen's Wake—and Struthers—and Robin Burns, that's worth a' the poets that ever tried the trade, in my humble mind—and we have very nearly a complete copy of the Encyclopædia—and we have the Edinburgh Review from the very beginning bound up, all but the three last numbers—and," added he, sinking his voice—"we have twa copies of the Age of Reason—and a gay wheen odds and ends besides, that we would not fain have ony body see but oorsells—but I'm sure, sir, an intelligent stranger like you might see our puir collection, if you would do us the favour to look at it."—"I am very much your debtor," said I—"and have you no meetings of a regular kind to discuss the subjects of all your reading?"—"Why, yes," he said; "we are pretty regular in the winter time—the Sabbath nights for ordinary—and as for simmer, we commonly take a walk to Ruglen, four or five of us, and have a quiet crack during sermon time at auld

Jock Blair's—him that was in trouble lang with Thomas Muir—he keeps a public there noo."

I would gladly have prolonged the conversation a little farther, but I heard the hour at which I was engaged sounded deep and hollow from the huge clock of the Cathedral, to which all the minor horologes of the city made ready response in their various tones of shrillness and clamour. I was therefore obliged to bid the weaver good bye—and to make the best of my way to my hotel, and from thence to Mr. ——'s. What a sad picture is here of the state of these conceited creatures! Truly, I would hope this fashion of superficial infidelity may not be far from going out altogether, now it has got so very low down in the scale. After I had walked a good many paces toward the city, I looked back to the bench where I had been sitting, and could scarcely contain my laughter, when I saw the disciple of David Hume sitting with his arms folded solemnly upon his breast, drowned, apparently, to the very edge of his greasy night-cap, in some of the same profound meditations from which my intrusion had for a little space withdrawn him.

* * * * *

* * * * *

P. M.

LETTER LXX.

TO FERDINAND AUGUSTUS POTTS, ESQ.

Clarendon Hotel, Bond-Street.

It was with great sorrow, I assure you, my dear Potts, that I found by your last letter that you are again laid up with an attack of your old complaint. From your description of the symptons, I apprehend no danger, but still you cannot be too cautious, and I recommend you to take particu-

lar care of yourself for a month or two at least. I wish to God I had you under my hands. I am quite sure I know your constitution better, and could cure you sooner than any other practitioner—What is even Mr. Cline, with all his genius, to me, that have known you ever since you had the measles?

——"*Experto credo Roberto.*"

The truth is, my good lad, that, after all, you have need of very little beyond what nature puts in your own power—but, my dear Potts, do take good care of yourself, I beg of you. Do not proceed in the old courses, my good fellow,—do not drink such enormous quantities of Vauxhall punch at night, nor smoak so many segars at the Cyder Cellar, nor guzzle so much Burton ale at that house in Henrietta Street, nor make a point of swallowing as much flip as would swim a goose at the Shades, nor give such liberal orders for champagne at the Cheshire, nor discuss such a quantity of gin twist at the Blue Posts, and the One Tun, nor go so often to that vile alley than runs between King Street, and Pall Mall, nor sit so late at Roubel's. In a word, you must remember that the indiscretions of a day are sometimes paid for by the sufferings of years. Do, now, turn over a new leaf, and I have no doubt that my physic, and your own sobriety, will soon make a man of you again.

I am glad, however, to find that the arguments I employed in my former letter, to induce you to visit Scotland, have not wholly failed of their effect. But you have been accustomed to move in so extended a circle of society, that you seem rather dubious whether you could easily reconcile yourself to the more limited one, to which in this country you would necessarily be confined. You are clearly unwilling to curtail the sphere of your attractions from ten thousand people to three hundred, and imagine that those blandishments which have procured you the character of a man of fashion at Almack's, would be utterly thrown away when displayed to a small set of female Sawneys in the George Street Assembly Rooms of Edinburgh. Believe me

there is more vanity than sound reason in this anticipated objection, as I shall very briefly demonstrate. You remember, three years ago, how we walked the Gallery of the Louvre (then in its glory) together, and expressed our admiration of the most striking beauties which there fell under our observation. I say the *most* striking beauties, because it was only those which we had then either time or inclination to remark. We gazed with reverence on the mighty works of Raphael, Rubens, Domenichino, and Michael Angelo, because much of the excellence of these great artists is perhaps too glaring and prominent to be overlooked even by the most casual and ignorant observer. But how many of the most exquisite masterpieces of art, of the most transcendent works of genius, did we pass over like so much waste paper. How many fine Guidos and Corregios, how many Claudes and Pousins, did we gaze on, with as much indifference as we do the sign of the Blue Boar in Fleet Street, or the Swan with two necks in Fetter lane?—paintings with which, our eyes undazzled by so extensive and brilliant a collection, we could not choose but have dwelt upon with admiration and delight. A fine man, my dear Potts, is like a fine picture. To be seen to advantage, he should be seen alone; at all events, he should never be surrounded with rivals quite as beautiful and brilliant as himself. The centre diamond (and it's a very fine one) of your grandmother's ring, whatever admiration it may attract on your finger, would pass quite unnoticed if transferred to the necklace of Mrs. Long Wellesley. At present the young ladies at the Opera and Almack's regard you with the most mortifying spirit of indifference. But only make your *entré* in Edinburgh Theatre, and I will bet you two to one, either in fives, tens, poneys or hundreds, that the box in which you are seated will form precisely the point to which all the opera-glasses of the Scottish spinsters will be immediately directed.

Another piece of advice which I have often given you before, but which I cannot help once more earnestly repeating, is—to *get married*. It was all very well to laugh at these things, as we used to do some ten or fifteen years ago; but we are all getting on, Potts, and depend upon it, if you

allow other ten years to slip over your single blessedness, you will not find it so very easy a matter to noose yourself to advantage. The truth is, I have a fine buxom widow (and, without flattery, you are just the man for a widow) in my eye for you. She is just about your own age, with a fine languishing pair of black eyes, and a fortune of thirty-thousand pounds, besides a large sugar plantation in Trinidad. Her husband only survived the honey-moon about a fortnight;—she was a most inconsolable widow for many months, and still continues to wear weeds for the "dear defunct." I have often heard you say you liked a high-spirited woman, and express much contempt for those "dull domestic drudges," as you call them, who are contented to sit pacifically at home, making puddings or darning stockings for their husbands. I assure you, you shall have no such complaint to charge on Mrs. F——, who, though I have no doubt, with such a husband, she will have too much good sense to attempt to wear the breeches, yet is altogether too well informed of her rights not to stick up for her own. The mode of my becoming acquainted with her is too singular to be passed over in silence. When sitting quietly at breakfast, with my friend Mr. W——, at the Hotel, we were suddenly alarmed with the most dreadful outcries from a neighbouring house. On running out to ascertain their origin, we found them to proceed from Mrs. F——, who it appeared had broken her leg by an over-exertion in the act of kicking an impudent footman down stairs. I immediately made an offer of my professional skill, which was thankfully accepted, and thus had many opportunities of improving my acquaintance with the agreeable widow With such a fine high temper as she has, I should be almost afraid to recommend her to any friend but you for a wife. But you are not a man to be henpecked, and I have no doubt will soon accustom her to the bit, and put her in proper training. If you mean to run for the plate, you must start immediately—no time to be lost. *Verbum sapienti.*

This letter, as you may observe by the date, (if there is one,) is written from the Buck's-head Inn, Glasgow, a capital house, which I beg leave to recommend to your patro-

nage, should you ever visit this city. I begin to think our friend Tom's mode of choosing a hotel is not a bad one. His selection is generally regulated by the weight and dimensions of the different hosts, well judging, that the landlord who exhibits the most unquestionable marks of good-living in his own person, is the most likely to afford it to his guests. On this principle of choice, I apprehend the Buck's head is entitled to a preference over most houses of entertainment in the kingdom. The precise weight of Mrs. Jardine, the landlady, I certainly do not pretend to know, and certainly believe it to be something under that of the *Durham Ox*. But the size and rotundity of her person so greatly exceed the usual dimensions of the human frame, that were they subjected to the rule of arithmetic, entitled, *Mensuration of Solids*, I am very sure the result would be something extraordinary. Her jollity and good humour, however, make her a universal favourite; and I can bear witness that her inmates have no cause to complain either of bad cheer or want of attention. I flatter myself I stand pretty well in her good graces; and, in consequence, am frequently invited to eat a *red-herring* in the back parlour, and take a glass out of what she calls *her ain bottle*. The bottle contains not the worst stuff in the world, I assure you. It is excellent Burgundy, and the red herring commonly turns out to be a superb chop *en papillote*.

Alas! my dear Potts, what frail and inconsistent creatures we are. Even I, who commenced this letter with preaching temperance and sobriety, am at this moment labouring under a most intolerable head-ache, from having last night been too copious in my libations. The fact is, I dined yesterday with one of the great civic powers of the city, and instead of sticking to my usual beverage, was fool enough to commute it for a treacherous and detestable liquor called Glasgow punch. Although I had frequently met with it, yet I had never been tempted to partake of it before; and seduced by its cool and pleasant flavour, and quite ignorant of its deleterious effects,

"Oh, I did quaff not wisely, but too well,"

as the state of my head and stomach this morning can well testify. Amidst the agonies it occasioned, I could not help ruminating on the kindness and liberality with which Nature accommodates her gifts to the wants of her different children. Not only has she bestowed a face of brass on the lawyer, and a throat of brass on the mob orator; but, by the beard of Esculapius—(I really cannot help swearing)—she must have given bowels of brass to the Glasgow punch drinker. On no other principle can the enormous quantities of punch, which the natives here swallow with impunity, be accounted for. For Godsake, Potts, profit by my experience, and if you ever visit this city, do not allow a drop of it to pass your throat. So will you escape those complicated tortures which I am now compelled to endure. The penance under which I groan, is one of a totally new description—it wants a name even in my copious vocabulary of Deipnosophism. It does not in the least resemble the dry husky agonies with which the sins of the too profuse port-bibber are visited in the morning—still less does it claim any kindred with the mad delirious dizziness which follows the delightful excitation of mingled champagne, green tea, and Eau de Garusse, in the Regent's punch—no, nor yet has it any of the same features with the drunkenness of gin-twist and tobacco, the leaden penance of the bowels of Mynheer. It is a new species—Oh, never may it be naturalized in Cardigan! An intolerable, griping, rending, shivering nausea within—cold feet and a burning brow—dim eyes—parched lips—and trembling fingers—(ecce signum!)—these are a few of the consequences of the enlightened hospitality of Glasgow. Yet you see all this does not prevent me from thinking on your still more desolate condition—and endeavouring, so far as my abilities permit, to contribute something to beguile the tedium of your couch in the Clarendon.

If you can only resist the fascinations of this poisonous liquor, (which, indeed, I admit to be very great,) there is no doubt you may spend a few weeks in Glasgow very pleasantly, when you make out your expedition to the North—which, of a truth, I now expect you will do ere many months elapse. You will have to do with a sort of people

quite as original as their liquor—and I am happy to say far more harmless, although, perhaps, not at first quite so fascinating as that is. You need not stand in the smallest apprehension of wearying or exhausting their kindness. Every day you will receive at least half-a-dozen new invitations—and if you were to prolong your stay for a twelvemonth, I am persuaded you would experience no sort of diminution in the fervour of their hospitality. I myself, who have been here only for three or four days, can already claim acquaintance with some three or four dozen of the prime ones of the place. I am engaged—(in case I remain here longer than it is likely I shall)—to dinner and supper every day for a month to come. The ladies share in the enthusiasm—and one—the very princess of the *Bon-ton* among these bourgeoises—gave a ball the other evening, principally, as she gave me to understand, in honour of your humble servant. If such be their reception of the plain Peter Morris, in his old long-backed brown coat and black silk breeches—think what would be the zeal with which the same individuals would hail the appearance of the dashing Mr. Potts—*the* Potts—as fine as the united skill of Blake—Stulze—Binckley—and Hoby, can make him.

I would give ten guineas—poor as I am—to see you make your debut in the Trongate of Glasgow, either on foot in the centre of the *pavé*—or shaving its edge with the glowing wheels of your tilbury. Good Heavens! what a stir you would create among the usual frequenters of that plebeian promenade! What a treat it would be to see the chaotic fermentation of wonder, curiosity, admiration, and envy, in the countenances of the gazers! What a dimness of eclipse the first emerging of your star would scatter over all the present luminaries of this neither horizon! How vain would be their attempts! How ineffectual their aspirations! The whole Dandyism of this Nothern Manchester would wither and crumble into nothing, before the brilliancy of the mirror of truth—the swing of the genuine beau!

I cannot say, however, that your triumph would be one on which you might have much cause to pique yourself—you never in your life saw such an arrant set of spooney-preten-

ders. In their gait, in the first place—they bear no resemblance to any other set of human beings I ever met with, and henceforth I am confident I shall recognize, by means of it, a Glasgow man quite as easily as I would a Chinese, in the city of London. The fellows are, some of them, not ill made, and if drilled properly, might cut a tolerable figure any where; but it is impossible to give you the least idea of the peculiar gesticulations of lith and limb, which accompany them every step they take, and scatter deformity over every part of their corporeal fabrics. They commonly move at a round swinging trot, with their arms dallying to and fro by their sides, like the eternal pendulums of an eight-day clock. Their legs are extended every step, so as to describe a circumference of a foot or two outwards, before they touch the ground, which they always do by the heel in the first instance—rising again from the fore-part of the foot with a kind of scrape and jerk, that beggars all description for its absurdity. I could sometimes burst with laughter, walking in the rear of one of them, and surveying at my leisure the fine play of inexplicable contortions all over the rear of the moving mass. Among them there are some egregious puppies: The *most* egregious all seem to be infected with a mania for sporting-paraphernalia—wearing foxes and tally-ho inscriptions on their waistcoat buttons—buckskin breeches and knee-caps—glazed hats with narrow rims, &c. &c. with exactly the same feelings of propriety which dictate the military swagger and costume of the men-milliners of the Palais Royal—their Polish *surtouts*—their *chasseur pantalons*—and their *moustaches à la Joachim.*

Absurd, however, as is their appearance on the Mall, their appearance at the ball I mentioned was still more exquisitely and inimitably absurd. I have seen all kinds of dances, from a minuet at St. James's to a harvest-home bumpkin in the barn of Hafod—but I never saw any thing that could match this Glasgow Assembly. I had dined that day very quietly, (comparatively speaking,) and went quite in my senses; but I don't believe there were half-a-dozen men in the room besides, that could be said to be within ten degrees of sobriety. The *entrée* of every new comer was announced in

the *Salle des presentations*, not more distinctly by the voice of the lacquey, than by the additional infusion of punch-steam into the composition of the atmosphere all around. And then how the eyes of the boobies rolled in their heads, as they staggered up to the lady of the evening to make their counting-house bows! Their dress was the *ne plus ultra* of dazzle, glitter, and tastelessness. Their neckcloths were tied like sheets about their clumsy chins—their coats hung from their backs as if they had been stolen from a window in Monmouth-Street—their breeches—or what was more common, their trowsers,—seemed to sit about their haunches with the gripe of a torturing machine—their *chevelures* were clustered up on the tops of their heads like so many cauliflowers, leaving the great red ears flapping below in the whole naked horrors of their hugeness. The ladies were as fine as the men—but many of them were really pretty creatures, and, but for the influence of that masculine contamination to which they must be so grievously exposed, I doubt not some of them would have been charming women in every respect. A few seemed to present a striking contrast of modest loveliness to the manners of the multitude—but the general impression produced by their appearance, was certainly very far from being a delicate one. The most remarkable of their peculiarities, is the loudness of their voices—or rather the free unrestrained use they make of them—for I give you my honour, sitting round the table at supper, I could hear every word some of them uttered, at the distance of thirty feet at least from where I sat. What a scene of tumult was this supper! There was plenty of excellent wines and excellent dishes, but I really could not get time to attend to them with the least of my usual devotion. Here was one reaching his arm across the table, and helping himself to something, with an accompaniment of jocular execration. There was another bellowing for boiled cabbage and a glass of champagne, both in the same breath. Here was a young lady eating a whole plate-full of hot veal cutlets, and talking between every mouthful as loud as a campaigner. There was an old fat dowager screaming for a bottle of porter—or interchanging rough repartees with a hiccuping baillie at the

opposite side of the table. What a rumpus was here! What poking at pyes with their gigantic battlements of crust! What sudden demolition of what pyramids of potatoes! What levelling of forests of celery! What wheeling of regiments of decanters! What a cannonade of swipes! What a crash of teeth! What a clatter of knives! Old Babel must have been a joke to this confusion of sounds!

The dancing was almost as novel a thing—I mean on the part of the gentlemen—for I must do the ladies the justice to say that they in general danced well, and that some of them danced quite exquisitely. The men seem to have no idea beyond the rudest conception of something like keeping time—and a passion for kicking their legs about them, apparently dictated by the same kind of hilarity which would have prompted them elsewhere to shying of black bottles against the mantle-piece, or a choral ululation of "here's to jolly Bacchus!" or, "variety is charming." Yet some of the cattle—yes, some of the most clumsy of them all, had the assurance to attempt a quadrille—a dance which seems to have made still less progress here than in Edinburgh, for it appeared to be hailed and applauded as a kind of wonder. The moment the set was formed, which took place in a smaller apartment communicating with the great dancing-room, the whole of the company crowded to see it, and soon formed a complete serried phalanx of gazers all about the performers. Nay, such was the enthusiastic curiosity of some of the ladies in particular, that they did not scruple to get upon their feet on the benches and sofas all around the wall—from which commanding situation there is no question they had a better opportunity both of seeing and being seen. At some of the pauses in the dance, the agility of the figurantes was rewarded, not with silent breathings of admiration—but with loud roars of hoarse delight, and furious clapping of hands and drumming of heels all about—nor did these violent raptures of approbation appear to give the slightest uneasiness to those in whose honour they were displayed. In short, my dear Potts, the last glimmering twilight hour of the Lord Mayor's ball, when the dregs of civic finery gesticulate, as is their

will and pleasure, beneath the dying chandeliers in the Egyptian Hall—even that horrible hour is nothing to the central and most ambitious display of this "at home" of Mrs. ——.

It is needless for me to give you any more particulars—You will comprehend at one glance what kind of scenes you would be introduced to were you condescending enough to vouchsafe your presence for a week or two at the Buck's-Head. You will comprehend what a sensation you would create both among the males and the females—with what clear undisputed supremacy you would shine the only luminary in this their night of unknowingness. Should you not approve of my Edinburgh widow—you would only need to look around you, and drop the handkerchief to any one of the undisposed of, of the Glasgow ladies. Beauties they have some—heiresses they have many. The lower cushion of the tilbury would be pressed in a twinkling by any upon whom you might cast the glances of your approbation. I speak this the more boldly, because I observed that the Glasgow fair treated one or two young heavy dragoons from Hamilton Barracks, who happened to be present at this ball, with a kind of attention quite superior to any thing they bestowed on their own indigenous Dandies. The most audacious coxcombry of the cits had no chance beside the more modest coxcombry of these Enniskillings. But, my dear fellow, what can the Enniskillings produce that could sustain a moment's comparison with the untainted, unprofessional, thorough-bred Bond-Street graces of a Potts? Those true "——Cupidinis arma,"

—— "quæ tuto fœmina nulla videt."

I pledge myself, that in the ball-rooms of Edinburgh, still more indisputedly and alone in those of Glasgow, your fascinations will be surfeited with excess of homage.

"Nulla est quæ lumina, tanta, tanta,
Posset luminibus suis tueri
Non statim trepidansque, palpitansque," &c.

If the old proverb hold true, *veniunt a veste sagittæ*, I pro-

mise you there would not be many whole hearts the morning after you had danced your first *pas seul* on the floor of the Glasgow Assembly rooms.

Ever very truly your's,

P. M.

LETTER LXXI.

TO THE REV. DAVID WILLIAMS.

The chief defect in the society of this place is, specifically, pretty much the same as in every provincial town I have ever visited; but I think it seems to be carried to a greater length here than any where else. This defect consists in nothing more than an extreme fondness for small jokes and nicknames —the wit of the place being almost entirely expended in these ingenious kinds of paltrinesses;—its object being, as it would appear, never to give pleasure to the present, otherwise than by throwing impertinent stigmas on the absent. Almost every person of the least importance is talked of, in familiar conversation, not by his proper name, but by some absurd designation, borrowed from some fantastical view of his real or imaginary peculiarities. It is really distressing to see how much countenance this vulgar kind of practice receives, even from the best of those one meets with here; but the most amusing part of the thing is, that each is aware of the existence of every nickname but his own, and rejoices in making use of it, little thinking that the moment his back is turned, he is himself subjected to the very same kind of treatment from those who have been joining in his laugh.

Another favourite species of Glasgow wit, however, is exercised in the presence of the individuals against whom it is levelled; and it is not to be denied, that there is much more both of ingenuity and of honesty in this species. I believe I should rather say there are two such kinds of wit—at least I have heard familiar use of two separate designations for their quizzing. I do not pretend to have analyzed the matter very

closely; but, so far as I have been able to comprehend it, the case stands thus:—

In every party at Glasgow, as soon as the punch has levelled the slight barriers of civil ceremony which operate while the cloth remains on the table, the principal amusement of the company consists in the wit of some practised punster, who has been invited chiefly with an eye to this sort of exhibition, (from which circumstance he derives his own nickname of *a side-dish*,) and who, as a fiddler begins to scrape his strings at the nod of his employer, opens his battery against some inoffensive butt on the opposite side of the table, on a signal, express or implied, from the master of the feast. I say some *punster*, for punning seems to be the absolute *sine qua non* of every Glasgow definition of wit; in whatever way, or on whatever subject, the wit is exerted, it is pretty sure to clothe itself in a garniture of more or less successful calembourgs; and some of the practitioners, I must admit, display very singular skill in their honourable vocation.

There are two ways, as I have hinted, in which the punning *side-dish* may perform the office in behalf of which he has been invited to partake of the less offensive good things that are going on the occasion; and for each of these ways there exists an appropriate and expressive term in the jocular vocabulary of the place. The first is *Gagging*; it signifies, as its name may lead you to suspect, nothing more than the thrusting of absurdities, wholesale and retail, down the throat of some too-credulous gaper. Whether the *Gag* come in the shape of a compliment to the *Gaggee*, some egregious piece of butter, which would at once be rejected by any mouth more sensitive than that for whose well-known swallow it is intended,—or some wonderful story, gravely delivered with every circumstance of apparent seriousness, but evidently involving some sheer impossiblity in the eyes of all but the obtuse individual who is made to suck it in with the eagerness of a starved weanling,—or, in whatever other way the *Gag* may be disguised, the principle of the joke is the same in its essence; and the solemn triumph of the *Gagger*, and the grim applause of the silent witnesses of his dexterity,

are alike visible in their sparkling eyes. A few individuals, particulaly skilled in this elegant exercise, have erected themselves into a club, the sole object of which is its more sedulous and constant cultivation. This club takes the name of "the Gagg College," and I am sorry to tell you some of the very first men in the town(—— —— I am told is one) have not disdained to be matriculated in its paltry Album. The seat of this enlightened University is in an obscure tavern or oyster-house; and here its eminent professors may always be found at the appointed hours, engaged in communicating their precious lore to a set of willing disciples, or sharpening their wits in more secret conclave among themselves—sparring as it were in their gloves—giving blows to each other more innocent, no doubt, than those which are reserved for the uninitiated. . . . . .

The second species is called *Fretting*—but I have not learned that any peculiar institution has been entirely set apart for its honour and advancement. It is cultivated, however, with eminent industry, at all the common clubs of the place, such as *the Banditti*, *the Dirty-Shirt*, *the What-you-please*, *&c. &c.* The idea to which its name points, (although somewhat obscurely perhaps you will think,) is that picturesque exhibition of the peculiar properties of a horse, which occurs when the unfortunate individual of that race about to be sold, is made to trot hard upon the rough stones of a Mews-lane, kicking up and showing his paces before the intending purchaser, in presence of a grinning circle of sagacious grooms, jockeys, and black-legs. You have seen such an exhibition. You have seen the agent of the proprietor seize the noble Houyhnhm by the white string fastened to his martingale, and urging him by hand and voice, to stretch his nerves and muscles to the cracking point—capering and flinging along as if the devil or the ginger were in him, till smack he comes against the brick wall at the end of the lane, where he is drawn suddenly up—his four extremities with difficulty collecting themselves so as to keep *him* upright upon the smooth round glossy knobs of granite, over which they have been moving with so much agility. You have seen the poor creature turned right about after the first trot—and

compelled, *invita Minerva*, to a second no less brisk and galling—to a third—and to a fourth—while all the time the eyes of those concerned are fix with Argus-like pertinacity on every quiver of his haunches. You have observed, above all, the air of pride and satisfaction, with which the generous animal sometimes goes through the trial—snuffing up the air with his nostrils—heaving his mane—and lashing the wind with his tail—and throwing superfluous vigour into all the ligaments of his frame at every step he takes—little knowing for what mean purposes the exhibition is intended—rejoicing with an innocent glee in the very acmé and agony of his degradation.

Even such is the condition of the poor Glasgow *Trottee*, upon whom some glorious master of the whip fastens his eye of cruelty, and his hand of guidance. He begins, perhaps, with a slight and careless assent to some unimportant remark, or a moderate response of laughter to some faint feeble joke, uttered by the devoted victim of his art. By degrees the assent becomes warmer, and the laughter louder—till at length the good simple man begins to think himself full surely either a wise man or a wit, as the case may be. It is not easy to say in which case the diversion afforded may be the most exquisitely delightful—whether it is most pleasing to see a dull man plunging on from depth to depth of grave drivelling, and finding in the lowest depth a lower still—laying down the law at last with the very pomp of a Lycurgus, on subjects of which he knows not, nor is ever likely to know, anything—his stupid features, with every new dictum of his newly-discovered omniscience, assuming some new addition of imposing solemnity—his forehead gathering wrinkles, and his eye widening in its lack-lustre glimmer as he goes on; it is not easy, I say, to decide whether this exhibition of gravity be more or less delightful, than that of the more frisky and frolicksome *Trottee*, who is, for the first time in his life, made to imagine himself a wit, and sets about astounding those who gaze upon him by a continually increasing nimbleness, and alacrity of inept levities—pointless puns—and edgeless sarcasms—himself all the while dying with laughter at the conceptions of his own wonder-working fancy—first

and loudest in the cachinnation which is at once the reward and punishment of his folly. I must own that the evil principle was strong enough within me to make me witness the first two or three exhibitions of this sort of festivity with not a little satisfaction—I smiled, *instigante plane Diabolo*, and not having the fear of the like before my eyes. On an after occasion, however, one of the most formidable of the practitioners thought fit to attempt making Dr. Morris his butt, and I believe he did absolutely succeed in trotting me a few yards to and fro on the subject of the shandrydan. But I perceived what was going forward in good time, and watching my opportunity, transferred with infinite dexterity the bit from my own mouth to that of my trotter—aye, and made him grind it till I believe his gums were raw. I had the good sense, however, to perceive the danger of the practice in spite of my own successful debut, and, God willing, from this moment, hope never to fill the roll either of *Trotter* or *Trottee*.

The ideas you will form of the style of society which prevails in this place, from these little *data*, cannot indeed be very high ones. Beware, however, of supposing that to faults of so detestable a nature, there are no exceptions. I have already met with many—very many—well-bred gentlemen in Glasgow, who neither *trot* nor are *trotted*—who never were so stupid as to utter a pun—nor so malicious as to invent or echo a nick-name. It is true, indeed, that they are the *nigro simillimi cygno* of the place; but their rarity only renders them the more admirable, and the less deserving of being crowded into the list of evil-doers, with whom they are continually surrounded.

P. M.

LETTER LXXII.

TO THE SAME.

* * * * *

After all, I am inclined to think that the manners of mercantile men are by no means so disagreeable as those of men engaged in most other active professions. In the manners of Glasgow, it is true, there is a sad *uniformity* of mercantile peculiarities; but how could this be otherwise in a town where no nobility resides, and where there is no profession that brings the aristocracy of talent much into view? In such a town, it is obvious there must be a miserable defect in the mechanism of society, from there being nothing to counteract the overbearing influence of mere wealth, or to preserve the remembrance of any other species of distinction. In a society where individuals claim importance on many different grounds, there must, of course, be produced an extension of thought, corresponding to the different elements which these individuals contribute to the general mass. But here, no doubt, the cup below is a dead one, and the one gilded drop floats alone and lazily upon the heavy surface.

Yet, taking matters as they are, perhaps the influence of the mercantile profession, although bad enough when thus exclusively predominant, is not, in itself, one of the worst. If this profession does not necessarily tend to refine or enlighten human nature, it at least does not distort it into any of those pedantries connected with professions which turn altogether upon the successful exercises of a single talent. The nature of the merchant is left almost entirely free, and he may enter into any range of feelings he pleases—but it is true he commonly saves himself the trouble of doing so, and feels only for Number One.

In Glasgow, however, it would seem that the mercantile body is graced with a very large number of individuals, who are distinguished by a very uncommon measure of liberality

of spirit. They are quite unwearied in their private and public charities; and although not much tinged with literary or philosophical enthusiasm in their own persons, they appreciate the value of higher cultivation to the community at large, and are, on all occasions, willing to contribute in the most laudable manner, to promoting, sustaining, or erecting institutions friendly to the cause of such cultivation. Two institutions of this nature have of late owed their being to this fine spirit of the Glasgow merchants, and I should hope they may long flourish, to reflect lasting honour on the names of their founders. I allude to the Astronomical Observatory—a very pretty building, magnificently furnished with all manner of instruments—and the New Botanic Garden, which is already of great extent, and which promises, I think, to be of amazing value. Both of these have been founded by private subscription among the leading members of the mercantile body in this thriving city—and the last mentioned is in the way of receiving continual augmentations to its riches from the kindred enthusiasm of liberality which exists among those young men connected with the place, of whom so many hundreds are scattered over every region of the world. The productions of distant climates are forwarded on every opportunity by these young persons to this rising garden in their native city; each, no doubt, deriving a generous pleasure in his exile, from the idea that he is thus contributing to the ornament of the place, with the localities of which his earliest and best recollections are connected.

But a few of the members of this profession, with whom I have become acquainted since my arrival here, are really men of a very superior class in every point of view—and might, I take it, be presented, without the least alarm for their credit, in any European society in which it has ever been my chance to move. These are commonly persons descended from some of the old mercantile families in the place—who, although they pursue the calling of their fathers—(and indeed to desert such a calling would, in their case, be pretty much the same sort of thing with giving up a fine here-

ditary landed estate)—yet enjoyed, in their earlier years, by means of the ancient wealth of their houses, every facility of liberal education, such as their native city could afford—and who, in not a few instances, moreover, have received many additional means of improvement from that foreign travel, in which a great part of their after and more strictly professional education consisted. These men busy themselves in the mornings with their concerns in the town; but in the evenings, they commonly retire to the beautiful villas which they have in the neighbourhood—and with the abundance of which, indeed, the whole face of the country round about Glasgow, in every direction, is adorned and enriched. Here they enjoy as much, perhaps, of elegant leisure and domestic enjoyment as falls to the lot of any other class of British subjects. The collisions in which they are constantly engaged with each other, and with the world, are sufficient to prevent them from acquiring any narrow and domineering ideas of sequestrated self-importance; while, on the other hand, the quiet and graceful method of their lives at home, softens and refines their minds from the too exclusive asperities of struggling self-interest, and the conflictions of the baser passions. I question whether our island can boast of a set of men more truly honourable to her character—more admirable both in regard to their principles and their feelings—more unaffectedly amiable at home, or more courteous in their demeanour abroad, than some of those, the *elite* of the merchant-house of Glasgow, at whose hospitable mansions, during the later days of my stay in this neighbourhood, I have spent so many delightful hours. By degrees, it often happens, these gentlemen abstract themselves altogether from business, handing it over, I suppose, to some of their sons or relations. They purchase land, and then take their place in the great body of British gentry, with, for aught I see, as much propriety, as any that elevate themselves to that most enviable of all human conditions, from any of those professions which think themselves too exclusively entitled to the appellation of liberal. After becoming acquainted with some of those enlightened and amiable individuals, and seeing the fine elegant way in which the quiet evenings of their days and of their

lives are spent, I could not help recollecting, with some little wonder, the terms of unmitigated derision in which I had heard the lawyers of Edinburgh speak concerning "the people of Glasgow." Truly, I think such language is well becoming in the lips of your porers over title-deeds—your fustian sleeved writers—your drudging side-bar jurisconsults. I should like to know in what respect the habitual occupations of these men are more likely to favour the culture of the general mind, than those of the great merchant, who sends his ships to every region of the habitable world, and receives them back loaded with its riches; or the great manufacturer who subdues the elements to his purpose, and by his speculations at once encourages the progress and extends the fame of those arts and sciences, in which not a little of the truest glory of his country consists.

The respectable families of this place have to boast, moreover, of having produced not a few individuals, who, abandoning the profession of their fathers, have devoted themselves to other pursuits, and achieved things that cannot fail to reflect honour both to them and the city of their habitation. Such was that gentle and delightful poet, James Grahame, the author of the Sabbath, who died only a few years ago in the midst of his family here, and over whose remains a modest and affecting inscription is placed in the choir of the Cathedral. I have been gratified more than once during my sojourn in Glasgow, with hearing the terms of deep and tender affection in which the memory of this good man is spoken of, by those whose admiration of his mild and solemn genius has been warmed and enriched into a yet nobler kind of enthusiasm, by the experience of his personal virtues—their own intimate knowledge of that fine heart, from which so many of his inspirations appear to have been derived, and with the pervading charm of which, each and all of his most beautiful inspirations appear to have been sanctified. It is, indeed, a precious pleasure which one receives in contemplating the sober endearing influences which survive the death of such a man, in the place where he was best known. This is the true embalming—such are

the men who scarcely need the splendours of genius to preserve their memories—who may

> ——————— trust
> The lingering gleam of their departed lives,
> To oral records and the silent heart.

The author of the Isle of Palms, and the City of the Plague, (whose exquisite lines on the death of James Grahame are engraved on the memory of not a few here, and elsewhere,) is himself also a native of this place, and connected by blood with many of the most respectable families of this vicinity. I mentioned this gentleman more than once to you in my letters from Edinburgh, and am glad that you were pleased with my account of his eloquence. The truth is, that I do not think justice is at all done in general to his genius—it is every where, indeed, admitted to be beautiful and various; but I suspect its strength and originality are not adequately appreciated, even by those who ought to be most capable of studying its productions. The meed of poetical popularity, (in its proudest sense,) has been bestowed, in our time, in a way that cannot be considered in any other light than that of extreme partiality, by all who contemplate the poetical works which have been produced among us, with a calm and deliberate eye. The reputation of those who have acquired great reputation, is perfectly just and proper; but there are not a few names which ought to share more than they do in the high honours which have been lavished on our first-rate favourites. Such, most assuredly, are the names of Coleridge, of Lamb, and of Wilson—three poets, distinguished by very different kinds of acquirement, and very different kinds of genius—but all agreeing in one particular, and that no unimportant one neither—namely, that they have appealed too exclusively to the most delicate feelings of our nature, and neglected, in a great measure, to call upon those more wide-spread sympathies, whose responses are so much more easy to be wakened—and, being once aroused, so much louder in their cheering and reverberating notes. I should except, however, from this rule, as applied to Mr. Wilson's poetry, his last and longest poem,

the City of the Plague—in which there is surely no want of passionate and powerful appeals to all those feelings and propensities which have been most excited and gratified by the most popular poets of our day. Of the comparative unpopularity of that poem, something, no doubt, may be attributed to the hasty nature of its plan and composition, and something also to the defective structure of its blank verse, which is certainly by no means what it should be—but I think no person who reads it, can doubt that it displays altogether a richness and fervour of poetic invention, and, at the same time, a clear pathetic mastery of all the softer strings of the human heart—such as in a wiser or a less capricious age, would have long since procured for the poem very extensive popularity—and for the poet himself, a much more copious reward of serious admiration than seems, as yet, to have been bestowed by the general voice upon Mr. Wilson.

It has often occurred to me, in thinking of other individuals beside this poet, that early attainment of great fame is by no means most in the power of those who possess the greatest variety of capacities and attainments. A man who has only one talent, and who is so fortunate as to be led early to exercise it in a judicious direction, may soon be expected to sound the depth of his power, and to strengthen himself with those appliances which are most proper to ensure his success. But he whose mind is rich in a thousand quarters—who finds himself surrounded with an intellectual armoury of many and various kinds of weapons—is happy indeed if he do not lose much time in dipping into the surface of more ores than his life can allow him time to dig to their foundations—in trying the edge of more instruments than it is possible for any one man to understand thoroughly, and wield with the assured skill of a true master. Mr. Wilson seems to possess one of the widest ranges of intellectual capacity of any I have ever met with. In his conversation, he passes from the gravest to the gayest of themes, and seems to be alike at home in them all—but perhaps the facility with which, in conversation, he finds himself able to make use of all his powers, may only serve to give him

wrong and loose notions concerning the more serious purposes to which he ought to render his great powers subservient. In his prose writings, in like manner he handles every kind of key, and he handles many well—but this also, I should fear, may tend only to render him over careless in his choice—more slow in selecting some one field—or, if you will, more than one—on which to concentrate his energies, and make a sober, manly, determinate display of what nature has rendered him capable of doing. To do every thing is impossible. To do many things well is a very inferior matter to doing a few things—yes, or one *thing*—as well as it can be done; and this is a truth which I question not Mr. Wilson will soon learn, without any hints beyond those which his own keen observing eye must throw in his way. On the whole, when one remembers that he has not yet reached the time of life at which most of the great poets, even of our time, began to come before the public, there seems to be no reason to doubt that every thing is yet before him—and that, hereafter, the works which he has already published, may be referred to rather as curiosities, and as displaying the early richness and variety of his capacities, than as expressing the full vigour of that "imagination all compact," which shall then have found more perfect and more admirable vehicles in the more comprehensive thoughtfulness of matured genius and judgment. I regret his comparative want of popularity, chiefly for this reason, that I think the enthusiastic echoes of public approbation, directed loudly to any one production, would have afforded a fine and immediate stimulus for farther exertions in the same way—and such is his variety of powers, that I think it a matter of comparatively minor importance, on which of his many possible triumphs his ambition should be first fully concentrated. You will observe that I have been speaking solely with an eye to his larger productions. In many of his smaller ones—conceived, it is probable, and executed at a single heat—I see every thing to be commended, and nothing whatever to be found fault with. My chief favourites have always been, the Children's Dance—the Address to the Wild Deer, seen on some of the mountains

of Lochaber—and, best of all—the Scholar's Funeral. This last poem is, indeed, a most perfect master-piece in conception—in feeling—and in execution. The flow of it is entire and unbroken in its desolate music. Line follows line, and stanza follows stanza, with a grand, graceful, melancholy sweep, like the boughs of some large weeping willow, bending slowly and sadly to the dirges of the night-breeze, over some clear classical streamlet fed by the tears of Naiads.

* * * * *

P. M.

LETTER LXXIII.

TO THE SAME.

It was in this part of Scotland, as you well know, that the chief struggles in behalf of the Presbyterian form of church government, in the latter part of the seventeenth century, occurred; and, in spite of the existence of many such individuals as the Philosophical Weaver I mentioned the other day, and of no inconsiderable extension of the tenets of the sceptical school of Scotch philosophy among persons of a higher order, it is here that the same love for the national system of faith and practice, out of which those struggles sprung, is seen still to survive, in not a little of its original fervour, in the breasts of the great majority of the people. I have witnessed many manifestations of the prevalence of this spirit since I came into the West of Scotland, and, I need not add, I have witnessed them with the sincerest pleasure. It is always a noble thing to see people preserving the old feelings and principles of their fathers; and here, there can be no doubt, there would have been a peculiar guilt of meanness, had the descendants of men, who, with all their minor faults, were so honest and so upright as these old Covenanters were, permitted themselves to be ashamed of adhering to the essentials of the system

for which they did and suffered so much, and so nobly. It is not to the people of the West of Scotland that the energetic reproach of the poet can apply. I allude to the passage in which he speaks of

> "All Scotia's weary days of civil strife—
> When the poor Whig was lavish of his life,
> And bought, stern rushing upon Clavers' spears,
> The freedom *and the scorn* of after years."

The idle and foolish whimsies with which the religious fervour of the Covenanters was loaded and deformed, have given away before the calm, sober influences of reflection and improvement; but it is well that the spirit of innovation has spared every thing that was most precious in the cause which lent heroic vigour to the arms of that devout peasantry, and more than ghostly power to that simple priesthood.

One of the most remarkable features which I have observed in the manners of the Scottish people, is their wonderfully strict observance of the Sabbath—and this strictness seems to be carried to a still greater height here than even in Edinburgh. The contrast which the streets afford on this day, to every other day in the week, is indeed most striking. They are all as deserted and still during the hours of divine service, as if they belonged to a City of the Dead. Not a sound to be heard from end to end, except perhaps a solitary echo answering here and there to the step of some member of my own profession—the only class of persons who, without some considerable sacrifice of character, may venture to be seen abroad at an hour so sacred. But then what a throng and bustle while the bell is ringing—one would think every house had emptied itself from garret to cellar—such is the endless stream that pours along, gathering as it goes, toward every place from which that all-attractive solemn summons is heard. The attire of the lower orders, on these occasions, is particularly gay and smart—above all, of the women, who bedizen themselves in this mercantile city in a most gorgeous manner indeed. They seem almost all to sport silk stockings and clean gloves, and large tufts of feathers float from every bonnet; but

every one carries a richly-bound Bible and Psalm book in her hand, as the most conspicuous part of all her finery, unless when there is a threatening of rain, in which case the same precious books are carried, wrapt up carefully, in the folds of a snow-white pocket-handkerchief. When the service is over at any particular place of worship—(for which moment the Scotch have, in their language, an appropriate and picturesque term, the *kirk-skailing*,)—the rush is, of course, still more huge and impetuous. To advance up a street, in the teeth of one of their congregations coming forth in this way, is as impossible as it would be to skull it up a cataract. There is nothing for it but facing about, and allowing yourself to be borne along, submissive and resigned, with the furious and conglomerated roll of this human tide. I never saw any thing out of Scotland that bore the least resemblance to this; even the emptying of a London theatre is a joke to the stream that wedges up the whole channel of the main street of Glasgow, when the congregation of one of the popular ministers of the place begins to disperse itself. For the most part, the whole of the pious mass moves in perfect silence; and if you catch a few low words from some group that advances by your side, you are sure to find them the vehicles of nothing but some criticism on what has just been said by the preacher. Altogether, the effect of the thing is prodigious, and would, in one moment, knock down the whole prejudices of the Quarterly Reviewer, or any other English High-Churchman, who thinks the Scotch a nation of sheer infidels.

Yesterday, being Sunday, I threw myself into the midst of one of these overwhelming streams, and allowed myself to float on its swelling waves to the church of the most celebrated preacher in this place, or rather, I should say, the most celebrated preacher of the day in the whole of Scotland—Dr. Chalmers. I had heard so much of this remarkable man in Edinburgh, that my curiosity, in regard to him, had been wound up to a high pitch, even before I found myself in the midst of this population, to which his extraordinary character and genius furnish by far the greatest ob-

ject of interest and attention. I had received a letter of introduction to him from Mr. J——, (for the Critic and he are great friends,)—so I called at his house in a day or two after my arrival in Glasgow, but he had gone to visit his friends in a parish of which he was formerly minister, in the county of Fife, so that I was, for the time, disappointed. My landlady, however, who is one of his admirers, had heard of his return the evening before, and she took care to communicate this piece of intelligence to me at breakfast. I was very happy in receiving it, and determined to go immediately; upon which Mrs. Jardine requested me to accept the loan of her own best psalm-book, and her daughter, Miss Currie. (a very comely young lady,) was so good as to show me the way to her pew in the church. Such, I presume, is the intense interest attracted to this preacher, that a hotel in Glasgow could not pretend to be complete in all its establishment, without having attached to it a spacious and convenient pew in this church for the accommodation of its visiters. As for trusting, as in other churches, to finding somewhere a seat unappropriated, this is a thing which will by no means do for a stranger who has set his heart upon hearing a sermon of Dr. Chalmers.

I was a good deal surprised and perplexed with the first glimpse I obtained of his countenance, for the light that streamed faintly upon it for the moment, did not reveal any thing like that general outline of feature and visage for which my fancy had, by some strange working of presentiment, prepared me. By and bye, however, the light became stronger, and I was enabled to study the minutiæ of his face pretty leisurely, while he leaned forward and read aloud the words of the psalm—for that is always done in Scotland, not by the clerk, but the clergyman himself. At first sight, no doubt, his face is a coarse one—but a mysterious kind of meaning breathes from every part of it, that such as have eyes to see, cannot be long without discovering. It is very pale, and the large half-closed eye-lids have a certain drooping melancholy weight about them, which interested me very much, I understood not why. The lips, too, are singularly pensive in their mode of falling down at

the sides, although there is no want of richness and vigour in their central fulness of curve. The upper lip, from the nose downwards, is separated by a very deep line, which gives a sort of leonine firmness of expression to all the lower part of the face. The cheeks are square and strong, in texture like pieces of marble, with the cheek-bones very broad and prominent. The eyes themselves are light in colour, and have a strange dreamy heaviness, that conveys any idea rather than that of dulness, but which contrasts, in a wonderful manner, with the dazzling watery glare they exhibit when expanded in their sockets, and illuminated into all their flame and fervour, in some moment of high entranced enthusiasm. But the shape of the forehead is perhaps the most singular part of the whole visage; and, indeed, it presents a mixture so very singular, of forms commonly exhibited only in the widest separation, that it is no wonder I should have required some little time to comprehend the meaning of it. In the first place, it is, without exception, the most marked mathematical forehead I ever met with—being far wider across the eye-brows than either Mr. Playfair's or Mr. Leslie's—and having the eye-brows themselves lifted up at their exterior ends quite out of the usual line—a peculiarity which Spurzheim had remarked in the countenances of almost all the great mathematical or calculating geniuses—such, for example, if I rightly remember, as Sir Isaac Newton himself—Kaestener—Euler—and many others. Immediately above the extraordinary breadth of this region, which, in the heads of most mathematical persons, is surmounted by no fine points of organization whatever—immediately above this, in the forehead of Dr. Chalmers, there is an arch of Imagination, carrying out the summit boldly and roundly, in a style to which the heads of very few poets present any thing comparable—while over this again there is a grand apex of high and solemn Veneration and Love—such as might have graced the bust of Plato himself—and such as, in living men, I had never beheld equalled in any bust but the majestic head of Canova. The whole is edged with a few crisp dark locks, which stand

forth boldly, and afford a fine relief to the death-like paleness of those massive temples.

Singular as is this conformation, I know not that any thing less singular could have satisfied my imagination after hearing this man preach. You have read his Sermons, and, therefore, I need not say any thing about the subject and style of the one I heard, because it was in all respects very similar to those which have been printed. But of all human compositions, there is none surely which loses so much as a sermon does, when it is made to address itself to the eye of a solitary student in his closet—and not to the thrilling ears of a mighty mingled congregation, through the very voice which nature has enriched with notes more expressive than words can ever be, of the meanings and feelings of its author. Neither, perhaps, did the world ever possess any orator, whose minutest peculiarities of gesture and voice have more power in increasing the effect of what he says—whose delivery, in other words, is the first, and the second, and the third excellence of his oratory, more truly than is that of Dr. Chalmers. And yet, were the spirit of the man less gifted than it is, there is no question these, his lesser peculiarities, would never have been numbered among his points of excellence. His voice is neither strong nor melodious. His gestures are neither easy nor graceful; but, on the contrary, extremely rude and awkward—his pronunciation is not only broadly national, but broadly provincial—distorting almost every word he utters into some barbarous novelty, which, had his hearer leisure to think of such things, might be productive of an effect at once ludicrous and offensive in a singular degree.

But of a truth, these are things which no listener *can* attend to while this great preacher stands before him, armed with all the weapons of the most commanding eloquence, and swaying all around him with its imperial rule. At first, indeed, there is nothing to make one suspect what riches are in store. He commences in a low drawling key, which has not even the merit of being solemn—and advances from sentence to sentence, and from paragraph to paragraph, while you seek in vain to catch a single echo, that gives promise of that

which is to come. There is, on the contrary, an appearance of constraint about him, that affects and distresses you—you are afraid that his breast is weak, and that even the slight exertion he makes may be too much for it. But then with what tenfold richness does this dim preliminary curtain make the glories of his eloquence to shine forth, when the heated spirit at length shakes from it its chill confining fetters, and bursts out elate and rejoicing in the full splendour of its disimprisoned wings!—

Φαινῃς μεν ξαχοτον τινα ομμεναι, αφρονα δ'αυτως.
Αλλ' ὁτε δη ξ ὑσια τε μεγαλην εκ στηθεος ιει
Και επεα νιφαδεσσιν εοικοτα χειμερηϭιν
Ομκ αν επειτ' Οδυϭηι γ'εριϭδεις βροτος αλλος.

Never was any proof more distinct and speaking, how impossible it is for any lesser disfavours to diminish the value of the truer and higher bounties of Nature. Never was any better example of that noble privilege of real genius, in virtue of which even disadvantages are converted into advantages—and things which would be sufficient to nip the opening buds of any plant of inferior promise, are made to add only new beauty and power to its uncontrollably expanding bloom.

I have heard many men deliver sermons far better arranged in regard to argument, and have heard very many deliver sermons far more uniform in elegance both of conception and of style. But most unquestionably I have never heard, either in England, or Scotland, or in any other country, any preacher whose eloquence is capable of producing an effect so strong and irresistible as his. He does all this too without having recourse for a moment to the vulgar arts of common pulpit enthusiasm. He does it entirely and proudly, by the sheer pith of his most original mind, clothing itself in a bold magnificence of language, as original in its structure—as nervous in the midst of its overflowing richness as itself. He has the very noblest of his weapons, and most nobly does he wield them. He has a wonderful talent for ratiocination, and pos-

sesses, besides, an imagination both fertile and distinct, which gives all richness of colour to his style, and supplies his argument with every diversity of illustration. In presence of such a spirit subjection is a triumph—and I was proud to feel my hardened nerves creep and vibrate, and my blood freeze and boil while he spake—as they were wont to do in the early innocent years, when unquestioning enthusiasm had as yet caught no lessons of chilness from the jealousies of discernment, the delights of comparison, and the example of the unimaginative world.

I trust his eloquence produces daily upon those who hear it effects more precious than the mere delights of intellectual excitement and admiring transports. I trust, that after the first tide has gone by, there is left no trivial richness of sediment on the souls over which its course has been. I trust the hearers of this good man do not go there only because he is a great one—that their hearts are as open to his sway as their minds are; and that the Minister of Christ is not a mere Orator in their eyes. Were that the case, they might seek the species of delight most to their taste in a theatre, with more propriety than in a church. I speak, I confess, from feeling my own feebleness in the presence of this man—I speak from my own experience of the difficulty there is in being able, amidst the human luxury such a sermon affords, to remember with sufficient earnestness the nature of its object—and the proper nature of its more lasting effects. What is perhaps impossible, however, on a first hearing, may, no doubt, become easy after many repetitions—so I hope it is—indeed why should I doubt it?—The tone of serious deep-felt veneration, in which I hear this great preacher talked of by all about him, is a sufficient proof that mere human admiration is not the only element in the feelings with which they regard him—that with the homage paid to his genius, there is mingled a nobler homage of gratitude to the kind affectionate warmth with which he renders this high genius subservient to the best interests of those in whose presence its triumphs are exhibited.

The very delightful and amiable warmth of the preacher—

the paternal and apostolic kindness which beamed in his uplifted eyes, and gave sweetness now and then to his voice, more precious than if he had "robbed the Hybla bees"—the affectionateness of the pastor, was assuredly one of the things that pleased me most in the whole exhibition, and it did not please me the less because I had not been prepared to expect any such thing by the reports I had heard of him in Edinburgh. He goes to that critical city now and then to preach a charity sermon or the like; and I can easily understand how it may have happened, that the impression produced by him there on such occasions, may have in general been very different from that which I witnessed here in his own church. I can easily suppose, that on these occasions he may put himself forward far more exclusively in the capacity of a combative reasoner—that then every look and gesture may speak too plainly his knowledge that he has hostile opinions all about him to grapple with. In fact, such a man must know that when he preaches any where out of his own church, his congregation is of a very mixed description, comprising persons who entertain every variety of opinion in regard to matters of religion. In Edinburgh, in particular, he must be well aware the field on which he is sent to labour has its tares as well as its wheat, in abundance. The beadle at the door, who, by a long succession of sixpences, has had his mind expanded into principles of universal tolerance, admits with equal kindness birds of every different kind of plumage—he shoves the sanctified hozier into the same pew with the disciple of David Hume, learned in the law. Having such dissimilar auditors to deal with, a preacher like Dr. Chalmers may very naturally be led to make use only of argumentation addressed to those reasoning faculties, wherewith all his auditors profess themselves to be more or less endowed. There is no doubt argument in the staple of his preaching even here—and so, in this age of doubt and argument, it ought to be—but here, at least, he contrives to adorn his argument with abundance of gentler accompaniments, which perhaps his modesty, among other things, may contribute to render him more slow in using else-

where. For myself, I have described him as I saw him in the midst of his daily audience—

> "In his allotted home a genuine Priest,
> The Shepherd of his Flock: or as a King
> Is styled, when most affectionately praised,
> The Father of his People."——

I shall not soon forget the looks of cordial love which seemed to beam from the pastor to his people, and back again from their eyes to their pastor, in the Tron Church of Glasgow.

I cannot help regarding it as a singularly fortunate thing, that the commercial population of this place should be favoured with the residence and habitual influence of such a man as Dr. Chalmers. In such a place, the existence of such a person is precious, a thousand-fold more than it could be almost any where else—precious and very precious as it would be every where. In the midst of the continual collisions of interest, smaller and greater, in which these busy traffickers are engaged, it must have a soothing and an ennobling effect to turn round ever and anon, and contemplate a man of great and original genius, and well-nigh unrivalled reputation, pursuing among them the purer and simpler walk of a profession, which in this, above all other countries, is a profession of humility and lowliness of mind. The high name of this great preacher is chiefly valuable to my mind—and I doubt not such would be his own modest sense of it—on account of the aid it must afford to the natural influence of his piety, and his pastoral exertions. Assuredly there is no profession in which the gratifications of personal distinction are so compatible with the loftier gratifications derived, and only derived from the consciousness of doing good—"Truly the lines have fallen to him in pleasant places."

After hearing this man preach, and seeing the faces of his congregation—and, indeed, after every thing that I have seen since I came into this part of the country—I feel more and more sensible of the erroneousness of those opinions

concerning the spiritual state of Scotland, which I myself formerly held. The fact is, my dear David, that, in my youth, I was a sharer, to my full measure, in all the usual prejudices of Oxonians; and that it is no easy matter to set me free in any one quarter from the clinging influence of those old prejudices. The plain truth of the whole matter is, that the ideas entertained in England respecting the state of religion in Scotland, are just as absurd as those which used to be in fashion about the external appearance of that country. I positively believe, that if the bench of bishops were requested at this moment to draw up, with the assistance of the Oxford and Cambridge Heads of Houses, and Regius Professors, a short account of its spiritual condition, they would talk as if it had as few men of rational piety in it as the Cockney wits used to think it had trees. According to these received opinions, the Scottish peasants are universally imbued with the most savage and covenanting fanaticism—a fault for which ample atonement is made by the equally universal free-thinking and impiety of the higher orders of their countrymen. Every Scotsman is a bigot to one or other of those equally abominable heresies—Atheism or Calvinism. They would represent the faith of this country as a strange creature, somewhat after the fashion of old Janus, dressed on one side in a solemn suit of customary blue, and on the other in the rainbow frippery of a Parisian fille-de-joie—giving with her right hand the grasp of fellowship to John Knox, and leering and leaning to the left on a more fashionable beau, David Hume.

The principal mouth-piece of this Southern bigotry is, I am very sorry to say, a work, for which I have in almost every other respect the greatest esteem—the Quarterly Review. It is a pity that that work, which exerts over the public mind of England so salutary an influence, as the guardian of her character—her true character, both political and religious—it is a great pity that this admirable work should in any way tend to keep up improper prejudices against the Scottish, among the majority of its readers. No doubt there is this

excuse for them, that they view the mind of Scotland as represented in some measure in the Edinburgh Review. But I, who am certainly no admirer of the religion of the Edinburgh Review, think it extremely unfair to represent it as being either the oracle or symbol of the spirit of the country wherein it is produced. Why, although the Edinburgh Reviewers sit at times in the chair of the scoffer, should the English be taught to think with disrespect of the religious condition of a country, which not long ago possessed a Blair, and an Erskine, and which at this moment can boast of Moncrieff, Alison, and Chalmers? The truth is, that I believe no country in Europe is less tainted with the spirit of infidelity than Scotland. The faith of their devout ancestors has come down to them entire; it is preached throughout this country by a body of clergymen, who, if they cannot pretend to so much theological erudition as some of our English divines, are in general far better informed upon matters of actual life than they are—far more fitted to be the friends and instructors of their parishioners—far more humble in their desires, and, I may add, far more unexceptionably exemplary *in* their life and conversation. The Scotch have indeed got rid of a great many of those useless prejudices with which their forefathers were infected, and which still seem to linger in the bosoms of some of our own countrymen; but the trunk has been strengthened, not weakened, by the lopping off of its rotten branches and excrescences, and although the tree of their neighbours may cast a broader shade, I have my doubts whether it be productive of better fruit.

One of the most remarkable changes which has occurred in the religious thinking of the Scotch, is that which may be observed in regard to their mode of treating those who profess a persuasion different from their own. Half a century ago, a Papist, or even an Episcopalian, appeared very little removed from the condition of a Heathen, in the eyes of a good Scots Presbyterian: here and there, people might be found who thought somewhat more judiciously, but the common opinion certainly was, that the idolatry of a Roman Ca-

tholic is quite as bad as that of a Cherokee or a South-sea-islander. The Scotch now no longer consider it as a matter of perfect certainty, that the Pope is the Anti-christ, and the church of Rome the Babylon of the Revelations. They do full honour to those heroic and holy spirits who wrought the great work of the Reformation, but they do not doubt that even those who nominally adhere to the ancient faith, have derived great benefit from the establishment of the new. They refuse to consider the kingdom of Christ as composed only of the little province which they themselves inhabit. They are thankful, indeed, for the mode in which their own district is ruled; they believe, perhaps, that their own municipal regulations are wiser than those to which most of their neighbours submit, but they never doubt, that throughout the whole of the empire, the general principles of government are substantially the same, nor hesitate to consider themselves as linked by the firmest bonds of common loyalty and devotion, both to each other and to that authority which all true Christians are equally proud to acknowledge and obey.

But, above every thing, what shows the absurdity of the Quarterly's notions upon these subjects in a most striking point of view, is this simple fact,—that in spite of the cuts which it is perpetually giving themselves, the Quarterly Review is a very great favourite among the Scotch. The Scotch have no such prejudice against English education, and the English forms of religion, as the Review attributes to them. On the contrary, they are delighted to hear these defended in the Quarterly, from the malignant aspersions of their own Edinburgh Reviewers;—so at least the enlightened and well-educated Scotchmen with whom I have conversed, have uniformly represented themselves to be, and I believe them most sincerely. It is time that all this foolery should be at an end, and that people, who in fact are of the same way of thinking, should not be persuaded into supposing themselves enemies to each other.

I remain ever your's,

P. M.

LETTER LXXIV.

TO THE SAME.

Dear David,

You must attribute my silence during the last eight days entirely to the kindness and hospitality of the good folks of Glasgow, who have really gained more upon me than I could have conceived possible in so short a space. Their attention has not been confined to giving me good dinners and suppers alone; they have exerted themselves in inventing a thousand devices to amuse me during the mornings also; and, in a word, nothing has been omitted that might tempt me to prolong my stay among them.—In truth, I have prolonged it much beyond what I had at all calculated upon;—indeed, much beyond what I could well afford, considering how the season is advanced, and how much I have yet before me ere I can bring my tour to its conclusion. However, I shall probably get on with less interruption, after I have fairly entered the Highlands, which, God willing, shall now be very soon, for I have arranged every thing for going by the steam-boat on Thursday to the Isle of Bute, from which I shall proceed in the same way, next morning, as far as Inverary, to which place I have just sent forward the shandrydan, under the sure guidance of your old friend, the trusty John Evans.

I have made good use of the shandrydan, however, in my own person, during the days I have lingered in this charming neighbourhood. In company with one or other of my Glasgow friends, I have visited almost every scene at all interesting, either from its natural beauty, or from the historical recollections connected with it, throughout this part of the country. I have seen not a few fine old castles, and several fields of battle. I have examined the town of Paisley,

where some very curious manufactures are carried on in a style of elegance and ingenuity elsewhere totally unrivalled; and where, what is still more to my taste. there are some very fine remains of the old Abbey, the wealth of which was transferred at the time of the Reformation to the family of the Abbot Lord Claud Hamilton, son to the Duke of Chatelherault, whose descendant, the Marquis of Abercorn, now claims that old French title, as being the male representative of the House of Hamilton. The Duke of Hamilton, you know, derives his highest titles from a female ancestor, but is himself, by blood, a Douglas, and representative of the heroic Earls of Angus, who, upon the downfall of the first House of Douglas, succeeded to not a little of its power, although they never attained to so dangerous a measure of pre-eminence.

But my most delightful excursion was to Hamilton itself, which lies about ten miles above Glasgow upon the Clyde; and is really one of the most princely places I have ever visited. This excursion was made in company with a most agreeable and intelligent young gentleman, Mr. J—— S——, one of the chief booksellers of this town, who is the publisher, and indeed the friend of Dr. C——. We met the Doctor riding, a few miles from the town, as we went along, and he was so kind as to accompany us also. His private manners and conversation are, I assure you, quite as admirable as his eloquence in the pulpit. He is, without any exception, the most perfectly modest man I ever met with—the most averse to all kind of display—the most simply and unaffectedly kind good man. Yet he is one of the most original men in conversation I have ever had the fortune to meet with—and I think throws out more new ideas, in the course of a few plain sentences, apparently delivered without the smallest consciousness that they embody any thing particularly worthy of attention, than any one of all the great men I have become acquainted with since I came to Scotland. It is easy to see that he has a mind most richly stored with all kinds of information—he is a profound master of Mathematics—and, at the

same time, more passionately fond of ancient learning than any of the Scottish literati I have seen. But all his stores are kept in strict subservience to the great purposes of his life and profession—and I think, various as they are, they gain instead of losing, both in value and interest, from the uniformity of the object to which he so indefatigably bends them. It is the fault of the attainments of most of the gifted men of our time, that they seem to be in a great measure destitute of any permanent aim, with which these attainments are connected in any suitable degree. But with him there is ever present the sense and presiding power of an aim, above all others noble and grand—the aim, namely, and the high ambition of doing good to his countrymen, and of serving the cause of religion.

We had a delightful ride after breakfast, along the side of the river, and reached, in a couple of hours, Bothwell, the seat of Lord Douglas, where we halted for a while to inspect the ruins of the old Castle. The situation is beautiful in the extreme—on a fine green bank, which slopes into the stream, and is overlooked from a grand screen of rocks on the other side, covered with all kinds of wood. The Clyde is a majestic stream here—flowing calm, full, and clear as amber, between these massive crags on the one side, and the blooming verdure of the banks and trees below and around the old Castle on the other. The ruins themselves are very extensive, and in its day the fortress must have been a prodigiously powerful one indeed. They are preserved in a style of exquisite propriety and tastefulness—with a reverent feeling of their true character apparently, and a just hereditary pride. They put me altogether very much in mind of the deserted parts of Warwick—and, indeed, I do not think the circuit of the interior court is at all inferior in its dimensions. In many places around the buttresses and angles of the keep, tower, and curtain, I could see the sorely mouldering armouries of the Morays, who were the first lords of the Castle—and in others, the better preserved achievements of the family which succeeded them;

precious memorials of those days, when, on every occasion in the armies of Scotland,

> ———"the Bloody Heart blazed in the van,
> Announcing Douglas' dreaded name."

After we had satisfied our eyes with the luxury of gazing upon these fine remains, we proceeded on our way towards Hamilton, crossing the river by the Bridge of Bothwell—the same on which the poor insurgent whigs were so easily vanquished, and so cruelly slaughtered by the Royalists in 1677. The high gate-way between two towers, of which mention is made in the accounts of the battle, has been removed, but otherwise the appearance of the structure perfectly corresponds with all the descriptions. There is a ridged bank on the opposite side, where the Covenanters had their camp, and which quite overlooks the whole of the way by which the troops of Monmouth made their approach—so that it is clear a very small measure of military skill might have been enough to render their position a very difficult one. But I suppose the account of their dissentions in Old Mortality, is a sufficiently accurate one, and it furnishes a very adequate explanation of the event as it occurred. Above the bridge, the river is seen winding for a mile or two from Hamilton, through a flat piece of meadow-land—or, as they call it, *haughs*—and such was the infatuation of the routed Covenanters, that they chose to fly in this direction, instead of keeping upward to the hills. That bloody old Muscovite, General Dalzell, is said to have galloped his dragoons upon the flying peasants, and to have made the river run in blood with his butcheries, in spite of the remonstrances of the gentler and wiser Monmouth. After the battle, a great number of the leading men, ministers and others, were hanged at the end of the bridge—where some hoary old willows, of enormous size, are still pointed out as having furnished the ready means of their execution. I met one day at Glasgow with a curious enough instance of the way in which these

executions were regarded. A gentleman pulled a remarkably beautiful old chased silver snuff box out of his pocket, and asking him for a pinch—"Yes, sir," said he—"do take a pinch, and let me tell you, you shall have your finger in the box that was found in my grandfather's waistcoat-pocket after he was hanged." It is a common saying that "a man is scarce of news, when he tells you his father danced a jig upon nothing"—but the cause of this gentleman's communicativeness was sufficiently explained, when I learned from one of the company, who remarked my consternation, that his grandfather was "one of the martyrs o' Bothwell-brigg."

We rode on to the town of Hamilton, having on either hand a fine prospect of the woods and lawns, which stretch for miles in every direction around the ducal mansion; and then having left the shandrydan at the inn, proceeded to take a view of the interior of the Palace—for by that name it is called—in compliment, I suppose, to the copious infusion of royal blood in the veins of this high lineage. The Palace is not a very splendid one—but it is very venerable, and furnished throughout in a grand old style, which I take to be a much finer thing than any of the gaudy pomps with which more modern and more fashionable mansion-houses are filled.—There is a noble suite of state apartments running the whole length of the edifice, all hung in rich crimson, (the colour of the family,) with roofs and doors of black oak, carved over every where with their bearings. From the windows of these, you have a most delicious view of long green lawns, interspersed with fine dropping elms on the one side—and on the other, a yet bolder and yet richer prospect of groves ascending upon groves into the midst of the higher grounds, where the deer-park is situated. But the chief ornament is the collection of paintings—which is out of all sight the first in Scotland—and inferior indeed to very few of those in England. It is an old collection, and has long been esteemed a rich one, but the taste of the present representative of the family, has added very much both to its extent and its value.

There is a long gallery, in the first place, almost entirely filled with portraits, among which I could see, I fancy, not less than a dozen of the very finest Vandykes. One of these is King Charles on his white horse, another undoubted original, and quite as good in my mind as that which the Prince has at Carlton-House. The attitude is the very same, but the colour of the horse is more inclined to a creamy yellow—the Regent's is almost pure white. There are magnificent Vandykes also of the two brothers, Marquisses of Hamilton, in the civil wars—and of I know not how many branches of the family. The finest of the whole, however, is the portrait of Lord Danby going a shooting, with a black boy in attendance, from which I am sure you must have seen an engraving somewhere. It is impossible that there should be a finer specimen of this master in the whole world—his grand graceful manner of conceiving every thing, and his soft delicate execution, are united in it in their utmost perfection of loveliness. In the middle of the gallery, there is the famous Rubens of Daniel in the Lions' Den, of which I need say nothing, as you are quite familiar with the prints. It is every way a princely gallery—you never saw a place more impregnated with the air of nobility. The other rooms are full of cabinet pictures, chiefly of the Italian masters—among which I could easily have spent an hour for every minute I remained. I cannot pretend to describing or even enumerating them—but the ones I chiefly delighted in, were some very bold rich Spagnolettos in the billiard-room—a Nicolas Poussin—the Burying of Abraham—and a Dying Magdalen, by Ludovico Caracci. The Poussin is really about the most wonderful of his works I ever saw. It represents the dawn of day, a thick blue mantle of clouds lying heavy upon the surface of the earth, and scarcely permitting the one cold stream of uncertain light to enter, which shows the sleeping patriarch folded in his long vestments, just sinking below the rock from the arms of his children. There is a deep primeval simplicity about the arrangement of the group, and a deserted lonely sort of weight in the heavens, and the earth all around, which

carries back the imagination into the very heart of the days of Shepherd Majesty. The Magdalen is preserved in a glass case—and truly it is worthy of all manner of attention. It is only a half length—it represents her as leaning backwards in that last gentle slumber, which slides unnoticed into the deeper slumber that has no end—her long golden tresses floating desolate and thin over her pale breast—her eye-lids weighed down with a livid pressure, and her bloodless lips closed meekly in a pensive smile of unrepining helplessness. A few little cherubs are seen looking with calm and rosy smiles of welcome from among the parting garments of the clouds above—stealing the eye upwards from the dim and depressing spectacle of repentant feebleness and mortality, into a faint far-off perspective of the appointed resting-place. I question whether it be not a pity to see such a picture at all—unless one is to be permitted to look at it till every lineament and hue is stamped for ever on the memory. But short as my time was, I treasured up something which I am sure I never shall forget.

We then walked in the Duke's Park, up the romantic glen of the Evan, which river flows into the Clyde almost close behind the palace, to see the remains of Cadyow Castle, the original seat of the family, and the scenery of that exquisite ballad of Scott's, in the Border Minstrelsy. The banks of this stream are about the most picturesque I have ever seen, and the situation of the old Castle one of the most noble and sublime. Nothing remains of it, however, but a few damp mouldering vaults, from the loop-hole windows of which one has a terrific plunge of perspective down into the yawning ravine below—and the scanty traces of the moat and draw-bridge, by which, on the other side, the approach of the fastness was defended. Originally, I believe, this was a royal seat, and conferred upon the first of the Hamiltons that came into Scotland, about the end of the thirteenth century. The situation is so very grand, that I am at a loss to account for their having deserted it, in order to remove to the plain where the present mansion—itself now of some three hundred years

standing—is placed. They talk of building a new house about the present time. If they do so, I hope they will take to the hill again, and look down once more in supremacy over the whole of the beautiful valley, which stretches at the foot of the rocks of Cadyow—whose towers and vaults have now for centuries, in the words of their poet, only

> "Thrilled to the music of the shade,
> Or echoed Evan's hoarser roar."

In the neighbourhood of these ruins, are still visible some of the finest remains I have ever seen, of the old original forest, with which the whole of our island was covered—the most venerable trees, without question, that can be imagined—hoary, and crumbling, and shattered every where with the winds and storms of centuries—rifted and blasted in their main boughs—but still projecting here and there some little tufts of faint verdure—and still making a gallant show together, where their gray brotherhood crowns the whole summit of the hill—these are

> ——————"the huge oaks of Evandale,
> Whose limbs a thousand years have worn;"

and among them I saw couched, most appropriately, the last relics of that breed of wild cattle, by which, in old times, the forests of Scotland were tenanted.

> "Mightiest of all the beasts of chase,
> That roam in woody Caledon;
> Crashing the forest in his race,
> The mountain bull comes thund'ring on.
>
> "Fierce on the hunters' quiver'd band,
> He rolls his eyes of swarthy glow;
> Spurns with black hoof and horn the sand,
> And tosses high his mane of snow."

The description in these lines is a perfectly accurate one—they are white or cream-coloured all over—but have their hoofs, and horns, and eyes, of the most dazzling jet. The

fierceness of the race, however, would seem to have entirely evaporated in the progress of so many ages, for the whole of the herd lay perfectly quiet while Dr. C——, Mr. S——, and I passed through the midst of them. I wonder some of our nobility do not endeavour to transplant a little of this fine stock into our parks. It is by far the most beautiful breed of cattle I ever saw—indeed, it bears all the marks of being the nervous original from which the other species have descended, taking different varieties of corruption into their forms, from the different kinds of less congenial soil to which their habitation has been transferred. But perhaps the Duke of Hamilton and Lord Tankerville, (for they are the only noblemen who are in possession of this breed,) may be very unwilling to render it more common than it is. I hope if it be so, they themselves, at least, will take good care to keep free from all contamination this "heritage of the woods."

The view we had from these heights, of the whole valley, or *strath*, or *trough* of the Clyde upwards, is by far the richest thing I have yet seen north of the Tweed. This is the Herefordshire of Scotland, and the whole of the banks of the river are covered with the most luxuriant orchards. Besides, there is a succession of very beautiful gentlemen's seats all the way along—so that the country has the appearance of one continued garden.

We dined quietly at Hamilton, and returned to Glasgow in the cool of the evening. There is absolutely no night here at present, for the red gleams of day are always to be seen over the east before the west has lost the yellow tinges of the preceding sunset. I sometimes laugh not a little when I reflect on the stories we used to be treated with long ago, about the chilness and sterility of the Land of Cakes, sojourning, as I now am, among some of the finest scenery, and under one of the most serene and lovely heavens, I ever saw in the whole course of my wanderings.

P. M.

LETTER LXXV.

TO THE SAME.

I SPENT the Friday of last week very pleasantly at —— Hill, the villa of one of my Glasgow acquaintances, situated a few miles to the north of that city. In the course of talk after dinner, when I had been enlarging on the pleasures I had received from hearing Dr. Chalmers preach, and, altogether from observing the religious state of the peasantry in this part of the world, a gentleman who was present asked me, If I had ever yet been present at the giving of the Sacrament in a country kirk in Scotland? and on my replying in the negative, expressed some wonder that my curiosity should not already have led me to witness, with my own eyes, that singular exhibition of the national modes of thinking and feeling in regard to such subjects. I allowed that it was strange I should not have thought of it sooner, and assured him, that it was a thing I had often had in my mind before I set out on my journey, to inquire what the true nature of that scene might be, and how far the description, given in the Holy Fair of Burns, might be a correct one. He told me, that without question, many occurrences of a somewhat ludicrous nature sometimes take place at these Sacraments; but that the vigorous, but somewhat coarse pencil, of the Scottish bard, had even in regard to these, entirely overstepped the modesty of nature, while he had altogether omitted to do any manner of justice to the far different elements which enter most largely into the general composition of the picture—adding, too, that this omission was the more remarkable, considering with what deep and fervent sympathy the poet had alluded, in "The Cotter's Saturday's Night," and many others of his compositions, to the very same elements, exerting their energies in a less conspicuous manner. While we were yet conversing on this subject, there arrived a young clergyman, a Mr. P——, a very agreeable and modest person, who, on understanding what we were talking of, said, That the safest and shortest way for the

stranger was to go and see the thing; he himself, he added, was so far on his way to assist at this very ceremony, at a parish some ten miles off, and nothing could give him greater pleasure than taking me with him. You may be sure I acceded to his proposal with great good-will, and I offered to take him to the field of action in my shandrydan. He hesitated a little about the propriety of deferring his march till the Sunday morning, but soon allowed himself to be over persuaded by the kindness of our host, who also determined to make one of the party.

Accordingly, at an early hour on the Sunday morning, we mounted, and took the highway to the Church of ——, for it was there the Sacrament was to be given. As we went along, Mr. P—— prepared me for what I was about to witness, by telling me, that according to the practice observed in the Scottish kirk, the Eucharist is distributed, in general, only once and never more than twice, at any one place in the course of the year. In the country parishes, there is rarely more than one such festival; and the way in which the preparations for it are conducted, are sufficient to render it a very remarkable feature in the year of the rural parishioners. Before any young person is admitted to be a partaker in the Sacrament, it is necessary to undergo, in presence of the minister, a very strict examination touching all the doctrines of the Church; and, in particular, to be able to show a thorough acquaintance with the Bible in all its parts. Now, the custom of the country requires that at a certain age the Sacrament should be taken, otherwise, a very great loss of character must accrue to the delinquent; so that to prepare themselves by reading and attentive listening to what is said from the pulpit for undergoing this examination, forms universally a great point of ambition among the young peasants of both sexes; and the first occasion on which they are to be permitted to approach the Altar, is regarded by them with feelings somewhat akin to those with which the youth of Old Rome contemplated the laying aside of the *Praetexta*, and assumption of the *Toga Virilis*. Never, surely, can the vanity of our nature be taught to exert itself in a more useful manner; for the attainment of know-

ledge, and the preservation of moral purity, are alike necessary to the accomplishment of the young Scottish peasant's desire, and the object of his desire is, moreover, in itself the discharge of one of the most elevating and affecting of all the duties which our holy religion has enjoined.

The preliminary examinations of the young communicants being over, the first part of the more public preparations commences on the Thursday preceding the Sunday on which the sacrament is to be given. That day is denominated *the day of fasting and humiliation*, and is still, as Mr. P—— said, observed in the way which the letter of that designation would imply, by not a few of the more elderly and strict of the good people. By all it is observed with a measure of solemnity, at least equal to that which usually characterises a Scottish Sabbath, and two sermons are preached, the tone of which, from immemorial custom, is pitched in such a way as to favour all humility and prostration of spirit on the part of those who hear it. The Friday is allowed to intervene without any public worship, but on Saturday again the church doors are thrown open, and two more sermons are addressed to the people, the strain of which, in compliance with custom equally ancient and venerable, is of a more cheering and consolatory nature. These sermons are preached by different friends of the clergyman in whose church the sacrament is to take place, a considerable number of whom are in use to be congregated in his Manse on this occasion, ready to assist him in every way with their advice and support in the conduct of the important scene over which it is his business to preside. The presence of these clergymen at the place in question, renders it necessary in most cases that their own churches should be left without service for that day: and this, taken together with the rarity of the spectacle, and the high interest which the Scottish peasantry take in all manner of religious services and institutions, is enough to account for the enormous conflux of people which pours from every parish of the surrounding districts to the church where the sacrament is to be dispensed, on the morning of the Sunday. It is not to be denied, however, said my friend, that the very circumstance of the greatness of

this religious conflux is sufficient to draw into its vortex an abundant mixture of persons, whose motives are any thing rather than motives of a devotional character. The idle lads and lasses all over the country think it a fine occasion of meeting together, and come to every sacrament in their vicinity as regularly as the most pious of their seniors. Nay, to such a pitch of regularity has this been carried, that it is no uncommon thing for servants when they are being hired, to stipulate for permission to attend at so many sacraments—or, as they style them in their way—*occasions:* exactly as is elsewhere customary in regard to fairs and wakes; and from this circumstance, perhaps, as much as from any thing that ordinarily occurs at these sacraments, the Poet of Ayrshire took the hint of his malicious nick-name.*

When we came within a few miles of ———, the greatness of the conflux, of whose composition I had been receiving some account, was abundantly apparent. The road along which we passed was absolutely swarming with country people, all bound for the same place, whatever differences there might be in their errands thither. Some of them cast inquiring glances at my worthy friend in black, as if desirous to know why he came among them in so unusual a kind of vehicle, and still more, if I mistook not their faces, what might be the character and purpose of his unknown companion. For my part, I was busy—contemplating the different groupes, sometimes as a painter, sometimes as a metaphysician. The modes of progression exemplified around me were threefold, viz.— 1*mo.* in carts; 2*do.* on horseback; 3*tio.* by the expedient which a certain profound lawyer has denominated *natural travelling (peregratio simplex,)* being that which the wisdom of Nature (in order to check the exorbitant avarice of inn keepers and hostlers) has made common to the whole human species. The carts were in general crowded with females, wrapt in large cloaks of duffle grey, or bright scarlet, which last might, perhaps, on this occasion, be considered as emblematical of their sins. In itself, however, it is without question not only

* I have heard that the bargain sometimes is, "one sacrament or two fairs," which shows where the predilection lies.

a comfortable, but a very picturesque, and even graceful integument; and I thought I could perceive, by the style in which its folds were arranged, that some of the younger matrons were not quite careless of its capacities for fascination. As for the unwedded damsels who sat by their sides, they were arrayed in their gayest attire of ribbands and top-knots, and retained still more visibly a certain air of coquetry, which showed that the idea of flirtation had not been entirely expelled from their fancies by the solemn character of the day, and their destination. The elder ones exhibited a more demure fashion of countenance, and nodded their heads very solemnly in unison, as the cart-wheels jolted over the rough stones of their path. A bottle or two, and a basket of provisions, generally occupied the space at their feet; and the driver of the vehicle was most commonly some lint-haired boy, full of rosy life and vigour, but evidently a loather of the Shorter Catechism, and all manner of spiritual cross-questioning—one, no doubt, extremely desirous of liberty of conscience. I observed one little fellow in particular, who, although he stared us in the face, seemed little inclined to recognize, by any gesture of reverence, the sacred function of my friend in the shandrydan. But this omission could not escape the notice of his grim wrinkled grandmother in the corner of the cart, who forthwith admonished the youngster to be more courteous in his demeanour, by a hearty thump over the elbow with her ponderous psalm-book—a suggestion, however, to which the urchin replied only by pulling his bonnet down more sulkily than ever over his freckled brows. This cart style of travelling seemed to be adopted chiefly by large families, a whole mighty household being sometimes crammed together in a way that must have precluded all possibility of sober reflection during their journey. On the other hand, some of those unfortunate couples whose union had not been blessed with any progeny, might be seen riding double on horseback, and thus making their way through the crowd with more eclat than any other person,—the affectionate housewife keeping her arm firm locked around the waist of her faithful John. A jolly, young,

new-married farmer, might be found here and there, capering lightly along in like fashion, with his blooming bride behind him. But the class of pedestrian pilgrims was by far the most numerous, comprehending every variety of persons, from the blue-bonneted Patriarch, trudging slowly with his tall staff in his hand, and never for a moment lifting his solemn eyes from the dust which his feet set in motion, to the careless shepherd-boy, peeling a twig from the hedge, and in jeopardy every now and then of drawing some heavier wand about his ears by breaking forth into a whistle,—a sound, than which, when heard on a Sabbath-day, there can be no greater abomination to the tympanum of a Scottish peasant, male or female, but, above all, the latter.

On reaching the village, we found the church-bell had not yet begun to ring, but a sufficient number had already arrived to fill completely the church-yard, and a considerable part of a grass field immediately adjoining. At the lower extremity of this field, a moveable sort of pulpit—(it is called *a Tent*)—had been erected,—from which, as Mr. P—— told me, those of the people who could not be accommodated in the kirk itself, were, throughout the whole of the day, to be addressed in succession, by some of the ministers who had come to assist the clergyman of the place. A beautifully clear little burn ran rippling along the side both of the church yard and the field; and on the green turf of its banks I saw the country maidens who had come a-foot seat themselves immediately on their arrival, and begin dipping their hands and their feet into its refreshing stream. It is the universal custom of the females in this quarter to walk their journeys bare-footed; and even in coming to church, with all their finery in other respects, they do not depart from this custom. Each damsel, however, carries in her hand a pair of snow-white stockings, and shoes, and these they were now preparing themselves to put on, by the ablutions I witnessed. It was a fine picturesque thing to see them laying aside their bonnets, and arranging their glossy ringlets into the most becoming attitudes, by help of the same mirror in which our first mother beheld the reflection of her own lovely form in Paradise. Among them many were ex-

tremely well-favoured; and some of them displayed limbs as elgantly shaped as were those which the charming Dorothea exhibited in a similar method to the enraptured gaze of Don Quixote. There was a sweet Arcadian simplicity in this untutored toilette; and the silence in which it was performed, added not a little to its air of artlessness, for each damsel sat by herself, and not a sound was heard near them but the chirping of the birds that hopped to and fro among the hawthorn bushes,—notes scarcely observed on any other day in the week, but heard clearly and distinctly at all times amidst the reverential stillness that pervades the atmosphere of a Sabbath-day in Scotland.

My friend, however, seemed to think that I was spending rather too much time in contemplating these beautiful creatures, so I permitted him to guide my steps toward the gate of the church-yard. At each side of this gate was already drawn up a considerable band of the lay Elders of the Kirk, whose duty it is to receive the offerings of those who enter, and to superintend the distribution of them among the poor. Opposite to each of the groupes stood a tall three-legged stool covered with a very white napkin, on the top of which was laid the flat pewter dish intended for the reception of the alms. These Elders were a most interesting set of persons, and I believe I could have studied their solemn physiognomies as long as I had done those of the young rural beauties at the burn-side. I regarded them as the *elite* of this pious peasantry, men selected to discharge these functions on account of the exemplary propriety and purity of their long lives spent among the same people, over whom they were now raised to some priest-like measure of authority. Some among them were very old men, with fine hoary ringlets floating half-way down their backs—arrayed in suits of black, the venerable antique outlines of which showed manifestly how long they had been needed, and how carefully they had been preserved, for these rare occasions of solemnity—the only occasions, I imagine, on which they are worn. The heads of these were very comfortably covered with the old flat blue-bonnet, which throws a deep and dark shadow over the half of the coun-

tenance. Others, who had not yet attained to such venerable years, had adopted the more recent fashion of hats, and one could see more easily beneath their scantier margins the keen and piercing eyes with which these surveyed every person as he passed—scrutinizing with a dragon-like glance the quantum of his contribution to the heap of guarded copper before them. As for passing their capacious plates without putting in something, that is a thing of which the meanest Scottish peasant, that supports himself by the labour of his hands, would never dream for a moment. To be obliged to enter the house of God empty-handed, is the very hardest item which enters into the iron lot of their parish paupers—and of these paupers there are so few in such rural places as this, that they scarcely need to be talked of as furnishing an exception to the general rule. Even the youngest children who came, and I saw many who could do little more than totter on their little legs—would think it alike a sin and a shame to put no offering into the Elders' plate. And yet there was no small degree of self-importance, I thought, in the way in which some of these little creatures dropped their half pence upon the board—not hiding their candlestick under a bushel, but ringing metal against metal as loudly as they could, in order to attract the notice of the staid superintenders of the collection. By and by, the minister and his assistants came down the hill from the Manse, he being distinguished from the rest by his Geneva cloak, while they wore no badge of their office but their bands. They were preceded by the beadle of the kirk, carrying with difficulty (for he was very ancient) a huge folio Bible clothed in black skin, and a psalm-book of corresponding dimensions. As the clerical groupe passed the Elders, a scene of cordial greeting occurred which it was delightful to witness—all shaking hands as they passed with those old men, and receiving from them looks and words of encouragement, as if to support and sustain them during the approaching exertions of the day. The minister of the place was a singularly primitive figure, with a long pale face, in which it was easy to trace the workings of anxious meditatoin, and eyes which I suspected had not been closed during

the preceding night. His friends were about six in number, and most of them younger men than himself, and they all entered the church along with him save one, who took the way to the Tent, there to commence the service out of doors at the same moment when it should be commenced within. Mr. P—— introduced me to the minister's wife, who made her appearance almost immediately afterwards—a seemly matron, who received me with infinite kindness in her way, and conducted me to her pew. When we entered, the old men were all sitting in the church with their bonnets on, and they did not uncover themselves until the minister began to read aloud the psalm—which was then sung, in a style of earnestness that was at least abundantly impressive, by them all—not one voice in the whole congregation, I firmly believe, being silent.

The impression that I first received on hearing the singing in the Scottish churches was by no means an agreeable one, at least in regard to musical effect. After the psalm has been read by the clergyman, (which is often extremely well done,) no solemn instrumental symphony opens the concert with that sure and exact harmony which proceeds from an organ, but a solitary clerk, (they call him *precentor*,) who is commonly a grotesque enough figure, utters the first notes of the tune in a way that is extremely mechanical and disagreeable. The rest of the congregation having heard one line sung to an end, and having ascertained the pitch, then strike in. Most of them sing the air in unison with the precentor, without attempting to take any other part, or to form concords. This is certainly the safest way for them; but even among those who sing along with the clerk, there are generally so many with bad ears, that the effect on the whole is dissonant. To introduce organs into the Scottish churches, has been proposed at different times by some of the clergymen, but the majority both of clergy and laity have always disapproved of that innovation. I have not heard what was the nature of the arguments employed against it; but I can easily understand that the aversion might not be in all cases the result of mere inconsiderate bigotry or blind prejudice. The modes of public worship are matters of such solemn usage, that they seldom

undergo any sober, considerate, or partial alterations. They are left untouched, except in times when the passions of mankind are very deeply and terribly stirred, or when great revolutions of opinion take place—and then they are changed with a mad and headlong zeal—and certainly there would be something very like indecent quackery, in rashly shifting about the forms of worshipping God, according to the mutable tastes of each successive generation.

The prayers and sermons of the old minister were very good in their style, but I waited with greater curiosity to witness the Scottish method of distributing the sacred symbols of the day. I used the word *altar*—but this you would easily see was a *lapsus*. They have no altar in the churches of Scotland—and, indeed, you know we had no altars, such as we have them now, in the east end of the churches in England, till that fashion was brought back by Archbishop Laud. Here the sacramental symbols were set forth at the upper extremity of a long table covered with a white cloth, which extended the whole length of the church, from the pulpit to the gate. At the head of this table, around which as many were already seated as it could at once accommodate, the minister of the place took his seat also; after his sermon was concluded, and he had read aloud several chapters of the Bible, which are pointed out for this purpose in the Directory of the Scottish Church, as containing words suitable to the occasion—words of encouragement to the worthy, and of warning to the presumptuous communicant. He then craved a blessing, and having broken a single piece of bread, and given of it to those immediately beside him, large loaves, cut into slices, were carried around the table, and distributed to all who sat at it by two or three of the lay-elders. The cup, in like manner, was sent round shortly afterwards—and during the time which elapsed in the distribution of these symbols, the minister delivered an address to those who were partaking in them—an address which I think had much better be spared—for silence surely is the only proper accompaniment to so awful a solemnity,—but in which, notwithstanding, he displayed a noble warmth and tenderness of feeling, which seemed to produce a very powerful effect

upon those for whom it was intended, and which could not fail to excite a feeling of much respect for the person by whom it was delivered.

After the address was terminated, those who had been its immediate objects withdrew, and left their seats free for the occupation of another company, and so in the same manner did company succeed company throughout the whole of the day—minister succeeding minister in the duty of addressing them,—which is called in their language *serving the tables*. Without pretending to approve of this method so much as of our own —nay, without attempting to disguise my opinion, that it is in many respects a highly improper method—it would be in vain for me to deny that there was something extremely affecting even in its extreme simplicity, and still more so in the deep and overwhelming seriousness which seemed to fill the spirits of the partakers. I have seldom been present at any scene so impressive; but I think the effect of the whole is much weakened by the length of time to which the service is protracted.

Out of doors, in the meantime, there was carried on, in all the alehouses of the village, and in many of the neighbouring fields, a scene of a very different nature. After sitting for an hour or two, I walked out to breathe the fresh air, and in passing through the place, was quite scandalized to find such a deal of racketting and mirth going on so near the celebration of such a ceremony, regarded and conducted by those engaged in it with a feeling of reverence so profound and exemplary. Here, indeed, I doubt not, might not a little of what Burns has described be found going on among the thoughtless and unworthy idlers, who had flocked from every part of the surrounding country to be present at the sacrament of Mr.——. I was overtaken in my walk by a little girl, whom the minister's wife had sent after me to invite me to come and *refresh myself* in the Manse. I went accordingly, and partook of a huge round of beef, which seemed to be intended to satisfy half the congregation, and then, at the request of my hostess, resumed my walk in her garden.—"Do not be seen strolling about the toon," said she; "there's eneugh o' ill example without a friend o' Mr. P——'s coming out of

the Manse to set it to them. If ye *will* walk on the Sabbath —walk where naebody will see you."

LETTER LXXVI.

TO THE SAME.

But the concluding evening scene was, without doubt, by far the most impressive of the whole. I have told you that a *tent* had been erected at the foot of the church-yard, and that from it different ministers preached to the multitude which overflowed after the church itself was filled, during the whole of the day: but now, after the sacrament had been dispensed to all who were admitted to that privilege, the kirk was shut up, and the whole of the thousands who had assembled, were summoned to hear one parting sermon at the tent together. The minister's wife and I came down the hill from the Manse just as this part of the service was about to commence, and ere we had come within sight of the place, the sounds of the preparatory psalm they were all *singing* together, came to us wafted over the intervening bean-fields on a gale of perfume, and softened into the balmiest melody by the space over which they travelled, in the rich stillness of the evening air.

There could not be a finer sight than that which presented itself to us when we came to the brink of the ravine which overhung, on the one side, the rustic amphitheatre now filled by this mighty congregation. All up the face of the opposite hill, which swept in a gentle curve before us—the little brook I have mentioned flowing brightly between in the gleam of sunset—the soft turf of those simple sepulchres, rising row above row, and the little flat tomb-stones scattered more sparingly among them, were covered with one massy cluster of the listening peasantry. Near to the tent on one side were drawn up some of the carriages of the neighbouring gentry, in which, the horses being taken away, the ancient ladies were seen sitting protected from the dews of the twilight—

while the younger ones occupied places on the turf immediately below them. Close in front of the preacher, the very oldest of the people seemed to be arranged together, most of them sitting on stools brought for them by their children from the village—yet fresh and unwearied after all the fatigues of the day, and determined not to go away while any part of its services remained to be performed. The exact numbers of those assembled I cannot guess, but I am sure they must have amounted to very many thousands. Neither you nor I, I am confident, ever beheld a congregation of the fourth of the extent engaged together in the worship of their Maker.

The number was enough of itself to render the scene a very interesting one; but the more nearly I examined their countenances, the more deeply was I impressed with a sense of respectful sympathy for the feelings of those who composed the multitude. A solemn devotion was imprinted on every downcast eyelid and trembling lip around me—their attitudes were as solemn as their countenances—each having his arms folded in his shepherd's cloak—or leaning in pensive repose upon one of those grassy swells, beneath which,

> Each in his narrow tomb for ever laid,
> The rude forefathers of the hamlet sleep.

Here and there I could perceive some hoary patriarch of the valley sitting in such a posture as this, with the old partner of his life beside him, and below and around him two or three generations of his descendants, all arranged according to their age and propinquity—the ancient saint contemplating the groupe ever and anon with a sad serenity—thinking, I suppose, how unlikely it was he should live long enough to find himself again surrounded with them all on another recurrence of the same solemnity of the Midsummer. Near them might be seen, perhaps, a pair of rural lovers, yet unwedded, sitting hand in hand together upon the same plaid in the shadow of some tall tomb-stone, their silent unbreathed vows gathering power more great than words could have given them from the eternal sanctities of the surrounding scene.

The innocent feelings of filial affection and simple love cannot disturb the feelings of devotion, but mingle well in the same bosom with its higher flames, and blend all together into one softened and reposing confidence, alike favourable to the happiness of earth and heaven. There was a sober sublimity of calmness in the whole atmosphere around—the sky was pure and unclouded over head; and in the west, only a few small fleecy clouds floated in richest hues of gold and crimson, caught from the slow farewell radiance of the broad declining sun. The shadows of the little church and its tombstones lay far and long projected over the multitude, and taming here and there the glowing colours of their garments into a more mellow beauty. All was lonely and silent around the skirts of the assemblage—unless where some wandering heifer might be seen gazing for a moment upon the unwonted multitude, and then bounding away light and buoyant across the daisied herbage into some more sequestered browsing-place.

In surveying these pious groups, I could not help turning my reflections once again upon the intellectual energies of the nation to which they belong, and of whose peculiar spirit such a speaking example lay before me. It is in rustic assemblages like these that the true characteristics of every race of men are most palpably and conspicuously displayed, and it is there that we can best see, in multiplied instances, the natural germs of that which, under the influence of culture, assumes a prouder character, and blossoms into the animating soul and spirit of a national literature. The more I see of the internal life and peculiar manners of this people, the more am I sorry that there should not be a greater number of persons in Scotland sufficiently educated to enter into the true feeling of literary works—so as to influence, by their modes of thinking, the tone of the compositions produced among them—so, by furnishing responses according to their united impressions, to keep men of genius true to the task of expressing the mind and intellect of their nation, and of recording all its noble dictates of more peculiar sentiment.

No person, who considers circumstances with an attentive

eye, can suppose that the Scots have already run their literary career. The intellectual power of the nation has never yet been strongly bent upon exploring what is peculiar to itself; and, until the time of Walter Scott, almost all its men of talent, who had education, expended their powers in modes of composition which were never meant to have any relationship with the native tastes of their country. If Burns had formed his mind among *them*, he would perhaps have left all his native thoughts behind him, and gone to write tragedies for a London theatre, in imitation of Otway and Rowe—in which case, I think it more than probable we should never have heard much about the divine genius of the Ploughman. The Scottish talent for ratiocination, has already been splendidly displayed; but mere reason, like mathematics or chemistry, is, in all countries, the same—there is no peculiar triumph in its possession or its results. David Hume spent a great proportion of his earlier years in France, and carried on all his studies there just as successfully as he could have done at home. But poetry, imagination, fancy, sentiment, art, philosophical belief, whatever comes from the soul—these are things in which every nation displays a character of its own, and which it consequently requires a separate and peculiar literature to express and embody; but these are things in which Scotland has not yet formed any school of its own—which, in other words, it has not yet cultivated upon principles sufficiently profound, or with enthusiasm sufficiently concentrated. If the national attention were more systematically directed toward these things, men of talent would have a definite object to aim at—they would seldom be led to exercise their powers in mistaken or unprofitable directions, and be seldom exposed to suffering the chagrin of failing to excite the interest of a public, which, in the very midst of its indifference, admits their ability. Neither, were such the case, would the peculiar veins of national thought be any longer left to be embodied in compositions written, like those of Burns, in the dialect of the lower classes. The bare circumstance of these compositions being so written, implies that they must be confined to a limited range of thought; but, had the sentiments they express, such treatment as they deserve,

they might be invested in the very highest and purest of forms, and applied, I nothing question, to adorn and enrich the most varied and boundless fields of conception.

You will laugh, my dear friend, when I tell you what one of my chief thoughts was while surveying these crowds of listeners. I looked over them, and scanned every individual attentively, to see if I could trace any countenance resembling that of Burns. The assembly around me might be considered as the very audience he addressed; and I understood every trait in his writings ten times better, from the consciousness of being among them. I felt from the bottom of my soul the sweet throes of tenderness with which he spake to them of all that filled up their existence, and produced the chequered spectacle of its hopes and fears; and I recollected, with a new delight, the exquisite touches of humour and fancy by which he took hold of and sported with their imaginations. I said to myself—No dull and hopeless clods of earth are here, but men, who, in the midst of the toils and hardships of the life of husbandmen and shepherds, are continually experiencing all that variety of mental impressions which is to be found in the poetry of Ramsay and Burns. The sprightly rustic flute of old Allan utters only melodies similar to those which the real every-day life of these good folks copiously supplies—while the soiled and tattered leaves of the grand, the tender, the inimitable bard of Coila, placed on some shelf in every cottage, perhaps beside a bit of looking-glass, reflect, like it, true though broken snatches of the common scenes and transactions of the interior. The deep-toned Mantuan, when he wished to draw out the moral interest of a rural life, was obliged to contrast its serene and peaceable enjoyments with the more venturous occupations, and the perpetual anxieties of Rome. He probably did not think that the lives of Italian husbandmen had sufficient character, or peculiar meaning, to make them much worthy of being pryed into.

> Quos rami fructus, quos ipsa volentia rura
> Sponte tulere sua, carpsit; nec ferrea jura,
> Insanumque forum, aut populi tabularia vidit.
> Sollicitant alii remis freta cæca, ruuntque
> In ferrum, penetr- it aulas et limina Regum, &c.

But Robert Burns has shown, that within the limits and ideas of the rustic life of *his* country, he could find an exhibition of the moral interests of human nature, sufficiently varied to serve as the broad and sure foundation of an excellent superstructure of poetry. I would there were more to choose their sites with equal wisdom, and lay their foundations equally deep; but I am half afraid you may be inclined to turn the leaf, and to compare my harangue with that of Don Quixote over the Acorns and the Golden Age.

You will admit, however, that my theme is a noble one, and that the scene which suggested it was eminently noble. I wish, from the bottom of my soul, you had come this tour with me, and so spared me the trouble of sending you these written accounts of things which it would have given you so much greater delight to see with your own eyes for yourself. I wish, above all, my dear Williams, you had been present with me at this closing scene of the Scottish Sacrament-Sabbath, the only great festival of their religious year. You would then have seen what a fine substitute these Presbyterians have found in the stirring up of their own simple spirits, by such simple stimulants, for all the feasts, fasts, and holidays—yes, and for all the pompous rites and observances with which these are celebrated—of the church from which they have chosen so widely to separate themselves. You would have seen, (for who that has eyes to see, and heart to feel, could have been blind to it?) that the austerities of the peculiar doctrinal system to which they adhere, have had no power to chill or counteract the ardours of that religious sentiment which they share with all that belong to the wide-spread family of Christians. You would have seen how compatible are all that we usually speak of as their faults, with every thing that we could wish to see numbered among the virtues of a Christian people. You would have seen it in the orderly and solemn guise of their behaviour —you would have heard it in the deep and thrilling harmony of their untaught voices, when they lifted them all up together in that old tune which immemorial custom has set apart for the last Psalm sung upon this sacred day,—a tune which is endeared to them by the memory of those from whose attach-

ment its designation is derived, still more than by the low and affecting swell of its own sad composing cadences—"The plaintive *Martyrs*, worthy of the name"*—The faint choral falls of this antique melody, breathed by such a multitude of old and young, diffused a kind of holy charm over the tall whispering groves and darkening fields around—a thousand times more grand and majestic than all the gorgeous stops of an organ ever wakened in the echoing aisles of a cathedral. There was a breath of sober enduring heroism in its long-repeated melancholy accents—which seemed to fall like a sweet evening dew upon all the hearts that drank in the sacred murmurs. A fresh sunset glow seemed to mantle in the palest cheek around me—and every old and haggard eye beamed once more with a farewell splendour of enthusiasm, while the air into which it looked up, trembled and was enriched with the clear solemn music of the departed devout. It seemed as if the hereditary strain connected all that sat upon those grassy tombs in bonds of stricter kindred with all that slept beneath them—and the pure flame of their Christian love derived, I doubt not, a new and innocent fervour from the deeply-stirred embers of their ancestral piety.

* * * * *

I had with some difficulty secured for myself a lodging at the little inn of the village, (for the Manse was so filled that the hospitable owner could not offer me any accommodation there,) and I was preparing at the close of the service to seek shelter beneath its tempting sign-post—

> "Porter, Ale, and British Spirits—
> Painted bright betwcen twa trees:"

---

* This tune is a great favourite all over the west of Scotland, and was so among the ancient Covenanters, as the name imports, and the stanza to which it is usually sung in their schools—

> "This is the tune the Martyrs sang
> When they, condemned to die,
> Did stand all at the gallows-tree,
> Their God to glorify."

But one of the neighbouring gentlemen, (a Sir —— ——,) had, it seems, seen me in several parties during the spring at Edinburgh, and he now came up, introduced himself to me, and requested me to spend the night at his mansion, where he said I should be quite as welcome, and a little more comfortable, than at the public-house. There was something so very frank in the address of the Baronet, that I immediately accepted of his invitation, and as the ladies had already taken the carriage home with them, he proposed to walk across the fields—leaving John to bring up the shandrydan at his leisure. Our way lay at first up one of those beautiful narrow glens, covered on all sides with copse-wood, which are every where so common in this romantic country. A rude foot-path crept along the side of the burn, from which the glen takes its name, crossed and shaded at every step by some projecting arm of the luxuriant woods that ascended from its edge, up the airy height of the over-canopying bank. Here we walked in silence, and single, for the path was too narrow to admit of our proceeding side by side—ruminating, I believe, with equal seriousness, on all the affecting circumstances of the solemnity we had been witnessing. We sat down, however, for a considerable time, upon a log of newly cut oak, when we had reached the other extremity of the glen, and talked ourselves into a familiarity that might almost be called a friendship ere we rose again. To say the truth, I was more than I can well express delighted, to find that the fine character of this religious peasantry is regarded as it ought to be by at least some of their superiors. It is not always that we find men of higher rank, and more refined habits, able to get over the first and external rudenesses which sometimes cover so much of real purity and elevation in the manners of those beneath them. This gentleman, however, appeared to have studied these good people with the eye of an elder brother, or a parent, rather than with any thing of the usual aristocratical indifference—an indifference, by the way, which was unknown to our ancestors, and which I detest among the aristocracy of the present day, because I regard it as more likely than any thing else to weaken, in the hearts of the peasantry, those feelings

of old hereditary attachment, for which so poor a substitute is found or sought in the flimsy, would-be *liberal* theories of the day. Sir —— talked of these rural worthies as if their virtues, in his eyes, were the dearest ornaments of all his possessions —and repeated, with a proud enthusiasm, an expression of a Scottish author, which I feel to be true no less than you will admit it to be beautiful,—"It would take a long line," said he, "to sound the depths of a gray haired Scottish peasant's heart."

Walking onwards we soon reached another little hamlet, at which its inhabitants had already arrived from the church by some nearer way—for we could perceive here and there, as we passed through it, some old goodman standing by himself in his little garden, or reposing with his wife and children upon some of the low stone-seats, with which the doors of their cottages are always flanked. It was a delightful thing to see the still thankful faces of these old people, enjoying the rich evening breath of the roses and sweet-brier, clustering about their windows—and the soft drowsy hum of their bee-hives. But here and there it was a still more delightful thing to hear, through the low door of the cottage, the solemn notes of a psalm sung by the family, or the deep earnest voice of the master of the household reading the Bible, or praying with his children and servants about him. "On the evenings of Saturday and Sunday," said Sir ——, "these fine sounds are sure to proceed from every *cot-house* in these villages—so that here every father is, in a certain sense, the Priest of his House. But among the goodmen, there are not wanting some who renew them every night of the week—and that in my youth was still more generally the custom." It is thus that the habitual spirit of devotion is kept up, and strengthened from year to year among these primitive people. These cotters are priests indeed,

> "Detached from pleasure, and to love of gain
> Superior; insusceptible of pride,
> And by ambitious longings undisturbed;
> Men whose delight is where their duty leads
> Or fixes them; *Whose least distinguished day*
> *Shines with some portion of that heavenly lustre,*
> *Which makes the Sabbath lovely in the sight*
> *Of blessed angels, pitying human cares.*"

P. M.

LETTER LXXVII.

TO THE SAME.

I SPENT a very pleasant night at the Baronet's—sleeping in a fine old vaulted bed-chamber, in one of the towers of his castle, from the window of which I had a command of one of the most beautiful tracts of scenery I have ever seen in Scotland. Close beneath, the narrow little glen was seen winding away with its dark woody cliffs, and the silver thread of its burn here and there glittering from under their impending masses of rock and foilage. At the far-off extremity, the glen opens into the wider valley of the larger stream, from which the whole district takes its name—of this, too, a rich peep was afforded —and its fields and woods again carried the eye gradually upwards upon the centre of a range of mountains, not unlike those over the Devil's Bridge—hoary and craggy, traced all over with the winter paths of innumerable now silent torrents.

I walked out before breakfast and bathed in one of the pools of the burn—a beautiful round natural basin, scooped out immediately below a most picturesque water-fall, and shaded all around with such a canopy of hazels, alders, and mountain ashes, as might have fitted it to be the chosen resort of Diana and all her nymphs. Here I swam about enjoying the luxury of the clear and icy stream, till I heard a large bell ring, which I suppose was meant only to rouse the sleepers, for when I had hurried on my clothes, in the idea that its call was to breakfast, and ran up the hill with an agility which nothing but my bath could have enabled me to display—I found the breakfast parlour quite deserted—not even the cloth laid. By and by, however, the whole magnificent paraphernalia of a Scottish *déjeune* were brought in—the family assembled from their several chambers—and we fell to work in high style. In addition to the usual articles, we had strawberries, which the Scots eat with an enormous quantity of cream—and, of course, a glass of good whisky was rendered quite excusable in the eyes of a medical man, by this indulgence.

After breakfast, the Baronet informed me that the Sacrament was not yet over; and that we must all to church again once more. As the Sunday set apart for this great festival is preceded by several days of preparatory worship so, in order to break off the impression produced by its solemnities, and allow of an easier fall into the ordinary concerns of life, the day immediately following it is also considered as in some measure a holy one—its observances, however, being conducted with a less profound air of seriousness, and its evening devoted to a kind of pleasant and innocent relaxation of mind, rather than to any studious preservation of the austere and unremitting spirit of devotion, exercised on the other days connected with the ceremony. There are two sermons, for sermons are great luxuries in the eyes of the Scottish peasantry, and they can never have too much of them. But after the sermons are over, it is expected that sober mirth shall occupy the rest of the evening. So far, in short, their Monday after the Sacrament may be considered as bearing some resemblance to our style of keeping Easter Monday.

We went to church, therefore, and heard two sermons—or rather I should say to the church-yard—for both preachers addressed us from the tent. The shandrydan was drawn up among the other vehicles to the right of the minister, and I flatter myself cut a very knowing and novel appearance there—but John would by no means occupy his place in it during the sermons, having already, as he said, had a copious belly-full of that sort of diet. And yet he might have had amusement as well as edification, had he had the grace to listen—for one of the preachers was certainly as comical an original, in his way, as I have ever chanced to meet with. He was an old man, with a fine rotund friar-like physiognomy, which, for a time, he in vain attempted to clothe with the true Presbyterian saturnity of expression. But after he had fairly got into the thread of his discourse, there was no occasion for so much constraint—the more jovial and sarcastic the language of his countenance, the better did it harmonize with the language of his tongue. This was a genuine relic of that old joking school of Puritans, of whose eloquence so many choice

specimens have been preserved by certain malicious antiquarians. With him every admonition was conveyed in the form of a banter—every one of his illustrations, of however serious a subject, was evidently meant to excite something like a smile on the cheeks of his hearers; and, as if fearful that the sermon itself might be too scanty of mirth, the old gentleman took care to interrupt it every now and then, and address some totally extemporaneous rebuke or expostulation to some of the little noisy lads and lasses that were hovering around the outskirts of the congregation. As he has the character of being a great divine, and an eminently devout man in his own person, this peculiarity of his manner produced no want of respectfulness in the faces and attitudes of his auditors; but, on the contrary, even the grimmest of the elderhood seemed to permit their stern and iron cheeks to wrinkle into a solemn grin, at the conclusion of every paragraph. As for the young damsels of the country, they tittered scandalously at some of the coarsest of his jokes—the severest of which, indeed, were almost all levelled against their own passion for dress, finery, and gadding about fairs, markets, and sacraments. He quoted not a few texts against these fine ladies, which, I take it, might have been quoted with greater justice and propriety against others more worthy of the name. However, vanity is perhaps more an equal possession of rich and poor, than one might be apt to imagine—and I thought I could see some little symptoms of the failing in our old preacher himself, when he observed the respectable attendance of gentry in their equipages—above all, between ourselves, when his eye rested on the unusual and airy elegancies of the unharnessed shandrydan. I nothing question this was the first time a tent-preaching in Scotland was ever listened to by one seated in such a vehicle. Indeed, if they borrow it from me, as I don't much doubt they will, I should not be a whit surprised to find them changing its name, and christening it A PETER, in honour of the individual that introduced its beauties to their attention.

That nothing might be awanting to complete my idea of the whole of the scene, the minister was so good as to ask me to dine at the Manse after the sermon, and Sir —— was included

in the invitation. We both accepted, and really I have very seldom eat a dinner which I should have been more sorry to have missed. I don't mean as to the viands in particular, although these too were not at all to be sneezed at. There was capital hotch-potch, a truly delicious kind of soup quite peculiar to Scotland, but worthy of being introduced into the very first leaf of the *Almanack des Gourmands*. It is made of mutton boiled—a complete chaos of vegetables of all sorts—green pease, however, being, I think, the predominant item. There was a dish of boiled, and another of broiled, herrings from Loch Fine—and I assure you I think this fish is superior here to any thing I have met with in Wales. There were no less than three sheep's-heads singed in the hair, which I am sure you would like, with the addition of a little Harvey. There was prime old mutton, which the minister's wife took care to tell me had been sent by Lady ——. Lastly, there was a whole regiment of gooseberry pyes—and as much cream in bowls of all sizes as would have drowned Alderman Curtis—though I don't know, if that worthy knight were reduced to the Duke of Clarence's choice, whether this would be the liquor in which he would prefer to be extinguished—

"Like a dish of fresh strawberries smother'd in cream."

After dinner, (which lasted a considerable time, and was done full justice to by all present,) we had a few bottles of excellent port and sherry, and then two punch-bowls were introduced. The one was managed by our host himself at the head of the table, (for by this time his wife had departed,) and the other, at the lower extremity, acknowledged the sway of the same jocular orator I have just been describing, who had now been advanced to the pre-eminence of croupier. The bowl at the top was presently filled with hot whisky toddy—that at the bottom with the genuine Glasgow mixture, in compounding which our croupier displayed talents of the very highest order. By and by, we were all in a state of charming merriment, although nothing could be more moderate than the measure of our indulgence. The conversation of the ministers was extremely picturesque and amusing, and opened up to me new

glimpses at every turn, into the whole penetralia of their own existence and that of their parishioners. They seemed all to be most worthy persons, but nothing could be more striking than the diversity in their carriage and demeanour. Our host himself, whose pale meditative face I have before noticed, seemed unable to shake from him, so much as he could have wished, the load of those official anxieties which had been burdening his mind during so many days of exertion. He sat, therefore, with rather an absent air in the midst of us, and smiling sometimes quite at the wrong moment. Some of his friends were old—some young—some silently disposed—some talkative. Some of them seemed to think it necessary or proper to be very sparing in their indulgence even of laughter—although it was easy to see that the jokes which were going were not lost upon them. The only thing they all agreed in was enjoying prodigiously the good things of the reverend croupier, who really opened a budget that would make Matthews or Bannister rich for twelve months. Among other things, he gave us song upon song—one I got a copy of, which I liked very well. It is written by himself, and expresses nothing but the true feelings of the man—for he is a great sportsman—although that part of his character is not quite to the taste of the peasantry. But I fear you will form but a very inadequate notion of the treat it afforded us, wanting the precious accompaniments of the good man's fine clear pipe, and the liveliness of the air itself, which was one which I never heard before—but shall endeavour to procure for you. As for the words, I think they are not deficient either in spirit or character—they might almost have been produced by the great Bucolic Jamie of Ettrick.

THE SHOOTING MINISTER.

When inclined for a shot, I am up with Aurora,
My jacket lies ready—my buskings are brief;
I speak not a word at the Manse to the snorers,
But whistle to Juno, and off like a thief.

3 9015 06586 6421

BOUND

MAY 5 1949

UNIV. OF MICH.
LIBRARY

DO NOT REMOVE
OR
MU[redacted]D